

SEPTEMBER 2008
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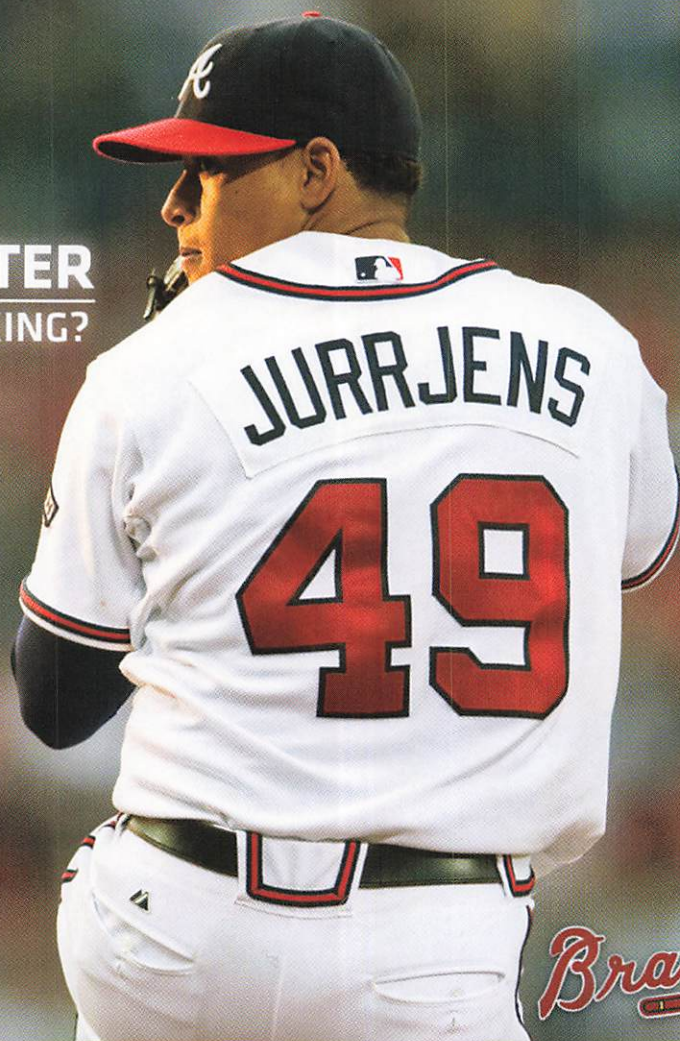
TopTalk

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES



*"So Long,
Everybody"*

**IS THERE ANYTHING BETTER
THAN WATCHING A STAR IN THE MAKING?**



SEPTEMBER DEALS & PROMOTIONS

SEPT 4 7:00 PM WASHINGTON THURSDAY 7:00 PM Hispanic Heritage Night Roberto Clemente Day 	SEPT 5 7:30 PM WASHINGTON FRIDAY 7:30 PM Publix Friday Night Fireworks Spectacular post-game fireworks display 	SEPT 6 7:00 PM WASHINGTON SATURDAY 7:00 PM Breast Cancer Awareness Day College and Military Discounts 2-for-1 tickets with student or service I.D. 	SEPT 7 1:30 PM WASHINGTON SUNDAY 1:30 PM Bark in the Park Presented by the Braves and Wag-A-Lot Alumni Meet and Greet All-Star Sunday Kids get to take the field after the last out 
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This Rockies series is presented by the Orlando CVB



SEPT 9 7:00 PM COLORADO TUESDAY 7:00 PM Bobby Cox Bobblehead Giveaway Presented by Coca-Cola to the first 15,000 fans 	SEPT 10 7:00 PM COLORADO WEDNESDAY 7:00 PM John Smoltz T-Shirt Giveaway Presented by Delta to the first 10,000 fans 	SEPT 11 7:00 PM COLORADO THURSDAY 7:00 PM September 11th Remembrance Day A day of tribute and remembrance 
SEPT 16 7:00 PM PHILADELPHIA TUESDAY 7:00 PM Coca-Cola 2-for-1 Tuesday Buy One Get One FREE Upper Reserved tickets 	SEPT 17 7:00 PM PHILADELPHIA WEDNESDAY 7:00 PM Braves Winter Hat Giveaway Presented by NAPA to the first 10,000 fans 	SEPT 18 7:00 PM PHILADELPHIA THURSDAY 7:00 PM Choptober Fest Traditional Bavarian band and learn to polka College and Military Discounts 2-for-1 tickets with student or service I.D. 
SEPT 19 7:30 PM NEW YORK FRIDAY 7:30 PM Fan Appreciation Weekend Salute to Braves fans with a chance to win prizes Publix Friday Night Fireworks Spectacular post-game fireworks display 	SEPT 20 7:00 PM NEW YORK SATURDAY 7:00 PM Fan Appreciation Weekend Salute to Braves fans with a chance to win prizes Future Stars Night Recognition of top Braves prospects 	SEPT 21 1:30 PM NEW YORK SUNDAY 1:30 PM Fan Appreciation Weekend Salute to Braves fans with a chance to win prizes Alumni Meet and Greet All-Star Sunday Kids get to take the field after the last out 

POWER HITTERS

SPECIAL REPORT

OUR TRIBUTE TO SKIP CARAY, ONE OF A KIND

5-10

"SO LONG, EVERYBODY"

Family, Friends, Fans, Colleagues and Players Gather To Celebrate A Baseball Life Well Lived By Patty Rasmussen

11

BEST FRIENDS

A Heart-Felt "Thank You" From A Long-Time Partner By Pete Van Wieren

12

MEMORIES

A Compilation Of Thoughts And Stories From Those Who Knew Him Well Compiled By Patty Rasmussen

13

PAINTING THE CORNERS

Heaven's Got a Heckuva Broadcaster By Jay Busbee

20-22

BRAVES WIN!

Sid Bream Trying To Help Pirates Reverse the "Curse" He Helped Create in 1992 By Steve Fall

24-26

BORN TO HIT

Casey Kotchman's a "Classic First Baseman" With an Impressive Baseball Pedigree By Jon Cooper

28-30

CHIPPER THROUGH THE YEARS

Personal Drama And a New Hitting Coach Set The Stage For an MVP Season By Jon Cooper

32-33

FAMILY DAY

Players' Wives And Children Take Over For Their Annual Day In the Spotlight



COVER CREDITS

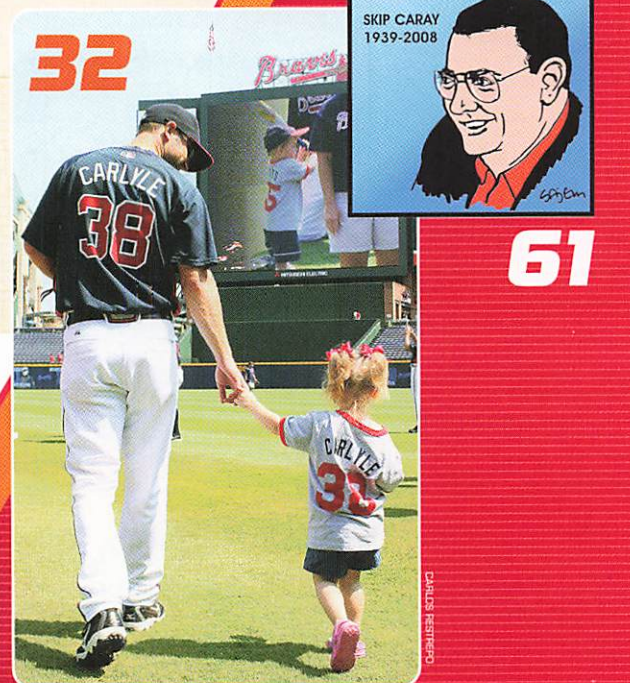
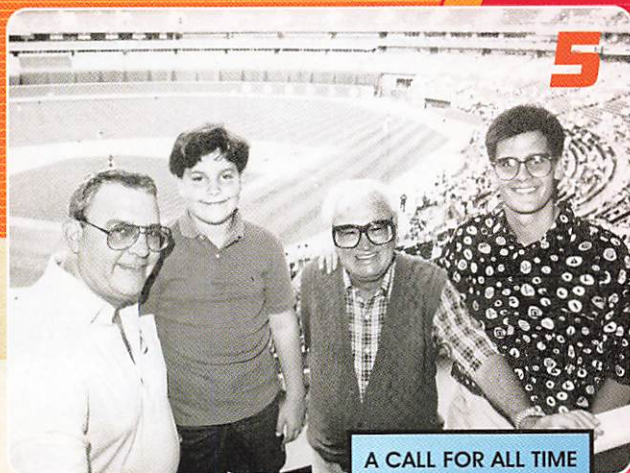
SKIP CARAY at his 2004 induction into the Braves Hall of Fame, by Allison Shirreffs

Design by Clark Odom

MORE ON SKIP

15
17
22
41
57
61

FRANK WREN
BOBBY COX
SID BREAM'S RECOLLECTIONS
By Steve Fall
TURNER FIELD TRIBUTE
By Mark Bowman of MLB.com
GARY CARUSO
JOHNNY SAJEM'S CARTOON



BATTING ORDER

SEPTEMBER 2008

SINGLES HITTERS

- 14-15 BUNTS & BASEHITS
- 16-17 OFF THE FIELD
- 18-19 Q&A WITH **BLAINE BOYER**
By Patty Rasmussen
- 39 BEHIND THE NUMBERS By Steve Fall
- 54-55 HEROES & HISTORY
Former Reliever **Craig Skok's** Most
Memorable Moment Was a Hit, Not a Pitch
By Brian Knapp
- 56 ALUMNI NOTES
- 58-59 BEYOND BASEBALL By Patty Rasmussen
- 60-61 TALKIN' CHOP
- 62 FAN @ LARGE
Power Lunch Packs a Very Tasty Punch
By Dennis Byron

PITCHERS

- 19 BATTER UP! By **Mike Hampton**
- 26 AROUND BASEBALL
By Ken Rosenthal of FoxSports.com



18

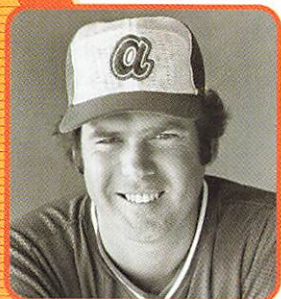
PINCH- HITTERS

- 48-49 TICKETS, TURNER FIELD INFO
- 50 2008 SCHEDULE CALENDAR/TV LISTINGS
ROSTER
- 51 INDIVIDUAL STATS
- 52-53 GAME BY GAME
- 55 HOW I MADE IT TO THE MAJORS
By Steve Fall
- 56 BIRTHDAYS



PAUL AHEL/ATLANTA BRAVES

54



ATLANTA BRAVES

ON DECK

- 43-47 FARM SYSTEM ROUNDUP By Bill Ballew
- 44 TOP PROSPECTS BY POSITION
- NAME THAT MASCOT
- 45 DOWN ON THE FARM By Matt Young
- 46-47 FARM SYSTEM STATS

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 9

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"So Long, Everybody"

Family, Friends, Fans,
Colleagues and Players
Gather To Celebrate
A Baseball Life Well Lived

By Patty Rasmussen

Leave it to Skip Caray, even in death, to bring out the best of the Braves.

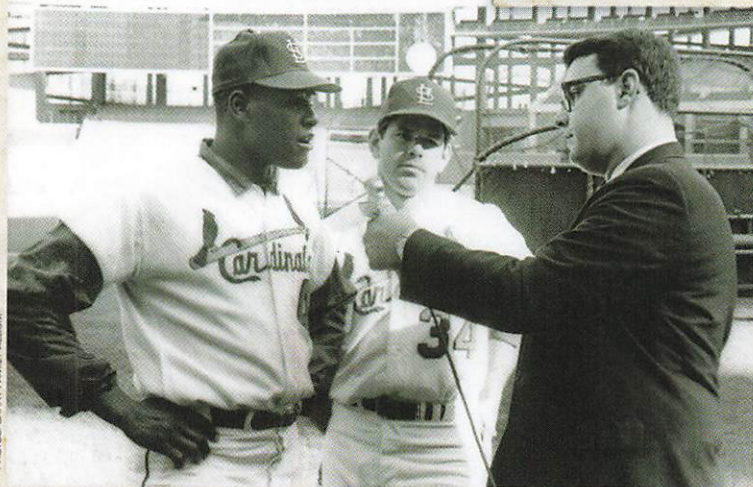
A veritable "Who's Who" of Braves franchise history covering several eras - good, bad and even ugly - turned out at the Cathedral of Christ The King, Aug. 11, to say farewell to the legendary Braves Hall of Fame broadcaster... and to share some laughs at his expense, as he would have wanted.

Harry Christopher "Skip" Caray, 68, died on



Skip (center) and his father, Harry Caray (L) hobnob in the dugout with Cardinals shortstop great Marty Marion.

Early in his career, Skip interviews future Cardinals Hall of Famer Bob Gibson (L) and Nellie Briles, another key pitcher.



PHOTOS: CARAY FAMILY ALBUM

Sunday, Aug. 3. He battled a number of different health issues including diabetes, irregular heart-beat, and liver and kidney disease, but in the end, it was none of those specific things that caused his death.

As Charlie Wickliffe, his doctor and good friend said during his eulogy at the funeral Mass, "Skip's great, generous, wonderful heart gave out."

Caray broadcast his last game on radio the previous Thursday, July 31, but had a touch of bronchitis and decided to take the weekend series off. He slept and rested and appeared to be getting better. The afternoon of his death, Caray took a nap and, upon waking, went outside to refill the bird feeder in his backyard. His wife, Paula, found him after he collapsed, holding the bucket of birdseed.

"We can take small pleasure in knowing that in

SKIP'S LIFE

Aug. 12, 1939
Born in St. Louis, Missouri.

1957
Graduated from Webster Groves (Mo.) High School.

1962
Graduated from University of Missouri, with honors in journalism.

his last moments, he was thinking about 'his' birds," said Wickliffe.

Though many fans chose to attend a memorial service at Turner Field Aug. 12 (see page 41) rather than venture into Atlanta's Buckhead district during rush hour the previous day, the church service - filled to capacity with 600 people - was open to all, at the wish of his wife, Paula.

"That's who he worked for, the fans," said Paula.

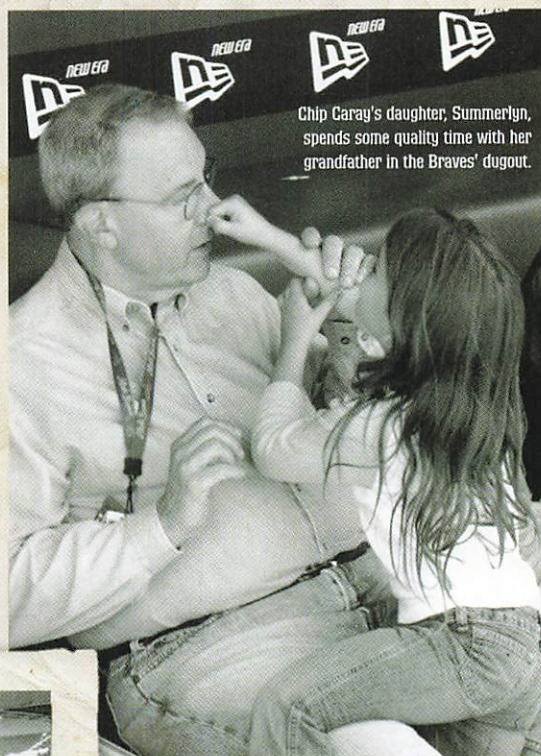
And as much as those fans appreciated Caray, the stars did, too. Those stars - including many members of this year's team on a scheduled off day - flocked to pay their respects.

Eulogies were delivered by Caray's fellow Braves Hall of Fame broadcasters Pete Van Wieren and Ernie Johnson, as well as John Schuerholz, John Smoltz, former Atlanta Flames (NHL) broadcaster Jiggs McDonald, and Wickliffe.

Pallbearers included Caray's sons, Chip and Josh Caray, Braves traveling secretary Bill Acree, Jeff Francoeur, Brian McCann and Chipper Jones.

"I was honored to be able to pay my respects in that way," said Jones.

Members of the front office in attendance included Braves Hall of Famer and chairman emeritus, Bill Bartholomay, chairman



Chip Caray's daughter, Summerlyn, spends some quality time with her grandfather in the Braves' dugout.



Four generations of Caray baseball broadcasters: (L-R) Skip, his youngest son Josh (now doing Rome Braves games), Harry and Chip (TBS).

PHOTOS: CARAY FAMILY ALBUM

Terry McGuirk, GM Frank Wren, Bruce Manno (assistant GM), Mike Plant (executive VP/business), Derek Schiller (executive VP/sales and marketing) and Chip Moore (senior VP/controller).

Some members of the team chose to ride on a chartered bus from Turner Field which delayed the start of the service by sever-

al minutes due to traffic, an irony not lost on anyone who heard Caray discuss, on air, the challenges of driving in Atlanta traffic over the past 25 years!

In addition to Jones, Francoeur, McCann and their wives, Sharon Jones, Catie Francoeur, and Ashley McCann, current players who attended the service included Tom Glavine, Charlie Morton, Clint Sammons, Buddy Carlyle, Blaine Boyer, and his wife Ginsey.

Former players in attendance included Phil Niekro and his wife, Nancy, Rick Camp, Keith Lockhart, Brian Jordan, Otis Nixon, Jeff Blauser, Javy Lopez, Charlie Leibrandt, and Ron Gant and his wife, Heather.

Bobby Cox was accompanied by his coaching staff, Roger McDowell, Chino Cadahia, Glenn Hubbard, Brian Snitker, Terry Pendleton, Eddie Perez with wife, Marisol, and senior baseball advisor Bobby Dews.

Pete Van Wieren's wife, Elaine, Lois Johnson, wife of Ernie Johnson, and their son, Ernie Johnson Jr., also a broadcaster, attended, as did Joe and Kathy Simpson and their son, Gabe.

1963

First job out of college, broadcasting baseball for the Southern League Tulsa Oilers.

1964

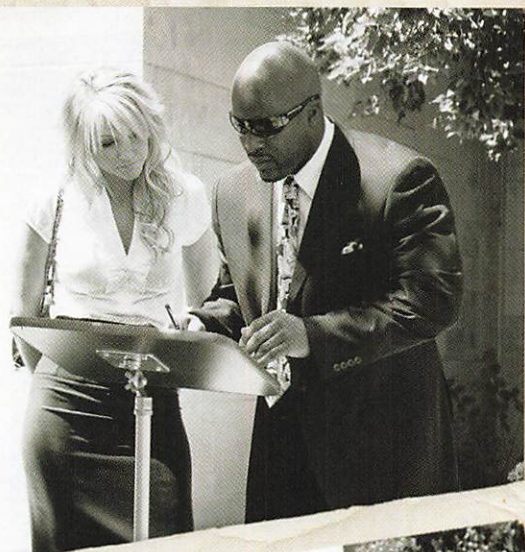
First baseball job in Atlanta, broadcasting Atlanta Crackers games at Ponce de Leon Park.

1967

Joined the NBA St. Louis Hawks broadcasting team.

1968

Moved to Atlanta permanently when the St. Louis Hawks became the Atlanta Hawks.



John Smoltz (bottom) and Tom Glavine (center) talk about Skip to the media prior to the church service, and Ron Gant (top), with his wife Heather, signs the guest register.



Dan Caesar St. Louis Post-Dispatch

"He was the son of one of the most famous names in baseball broadcasting history, and was born with the added burden of having his father's name. But Harry Caray Jr. formed his own identity, becoming known as "Skip," in rising from the immense shadow of his dad at KMOX radio in St. Louis to national prominence in sportscasting."

Former pitching coach Leo Mazzone was there, as was Stan Kasten, president of the Washington Nationals and former Braves and Hawks president, and his wife, Helen. Don Sutton, the Hall of Fame pitcher and former Braves broadcaster who now works for the Nationals, attended, as well.

Monsignor Tom Kenny, in a lilting Irish accent, set the stage for the eulogies with the opening remarks from his homily.

"I'm sure Skip Caray would not want me to canonize him," he said. "You'll hear more from his friends, so as Skip would say, 'Stay tuned. Don't turn off your sets!'"

Van Wieren hit leadoff among the eulogists, recalling the first time he met Caray in 1975, and described a professional relationship that quickly became personal, as well.

"We became grandparents for the first time, one day apart," he said. "We had parties, dinners, card games, millions of miles flying across the country, and, yes, a couple of drinks."

Van Wieren said that Caray's ability to "capture the moment" was second to none.

"By my count, we worked in the neighborhood of 5,000 games together, and it never got old. Every day was a new adventure," said Van Wieren. "Thanks for letting all of us be part of your life. Thanks for letting us share the ride."

Next up was Johnson, who recalled the time when Caray complained during a broadcast about road construction and the DOT's orange barrels all over the highway.

"Two days later, we had a couple of guys from the Department of Transportation show up with a barrel with his name on it and one with my name on it!" said Johnson. "He always said things with a twinkle in his eye. I don't think we had a cross word in all those years of working together."

Wickliffe, Caray's physician and friend, compared being his doctor to being the watch officer on the Titanic.

"You knew the captain was going straight ahead at full speed,

Mark Bradley Atlanta Journal-Constitution

"The one and only Skip Caray died Sunday. Ennobled by his life, we are, all of us, lessened by his passing. Feel free to shed a tear, to say a prayer, to smile over a remembered Skip-ism. But please, whatever you do, don't start the Wave."

1972

Joined TBS (then WTCG-TV), as the voice of the Atlanta Hawks.

1976

First season as TBS Braves broadcaster, along with Ernie Johnson and Pete Van Wieren.

May 13, 1991

Three generations of Carays - Harry, Skip and Chip - broadcast a Braves/Cubs game at Wrigley Field, a major league first.

July 30, 2000

"Skip Caray and Pete Van Wieren Day," as proclaimed by then Atlanta mayor Bill Campbell, commemorating their 25th year of broadcasting together

and he wasn't going to change course," he said. "But Skip lived his life fully and had no regrets."

Wickliffe spoke of Caray's love for jokes, the raunchier the better, and how his friend and patient flooded the inbox of his e-mail with jokes late into the night.

"My e-mail has been deathly silent since he's gone," said Wickliffe.

The next speaker, McDonald, was one of Caray's closest friends, serving as best man at his wedding to Paula. The two men met in 1972 when the Atlanta Flames hockey team came to Atlanta. They became fast friends, and Caray quickly introduced McDonald to many of his running buddies in the sports journalism community. He told about the time Caray filled in during a Flames game for McDonald.

"When I went back and listened to the tape, I didn't recognize

David Lauderdale (Hilton Head) Islandpacket.com

"Skip Caray was more like a guy calling the game from a bar stool than a radio booth. People who are not Braves fans found more fault in that than we did. We got used to it. We accepted it. The world needs more of that."

ager came to our table and said, 'Mr. Schuerholz, we're so proud of our Braves that the lunch is on me.' I thought Skip would go through the roof!"

Finally Smoltz spoke on behalf of his teammates.

"Skip truly loved the Atlanta Braves and always had time to come downstairs to say hello to the players and to tell his jokes," said Smoltz. "It had taken him a little longer this season. He moved a little slower, but he still came downstairs."

Smoltz said spending time on the disabled list gave him the opportunity to sit in the broadcast booth.

"I gained a new perspective into the work he did with Pete," he said. "I will always remember that he got to say, 'Braves win! Braves win! Braves win!' And that he got to call a championship."

Caray was baptized in the Catholic faith as an infant, and the service included a full Catholic Mass. Though the service wasn't due to begin until 4 p.m., guests began arriving two hours early, milling around outside the church. Among those arriving first, members of television crews, many of who worked with Caray for 20 years or more.

Guests were admitted to the church soon after 3 o'clock, and the back section was quickly filled by friends and fans. A section of seats to the right of the main altar was reserved for Braves front office staff, and a section of seats to the left

was set aside for members of the media. The Caray family sat in 10 rows of the front-right section, with close family friends filling in behind them. The front-left section of pews was reserved for Braves personnel.

The service concluded an hour and 40 minutes after it began. Afterwards, guests spilled onto the stone steps of the cathedral, milling around and reminiscing even more.

The Carays hosted a reception at a nearby restaurant, 103 West, for close friends and family. The cocktail and dinner reception featured photo displays of Caray's colorful life - including scenes from his childhood in St. Louis... with his father in the Cardinals' dugout as a young boy... a wedding photo of he and Paula... in the



(L-R) Chipper Jones, Jeff Francoeur and Brian McCann were among the honorary pallbearers.

any of the names," said McDonald. "I asked Skip about it and he said, 'I didn't know who (the players) were, so I used names from my old college football team!'"

Schuerholz happily recalled annual pre-season lunch dates with Caray beginning in 1991, the year he arrived in Atlanta.

"He would buy, unless we won it all," said Schuerholz of their arrangement.

Caray was delighted when the Braves won the World Championship in 1995, since it meant Schuerholz would pick up the lunch tab.

"Finally, the moment arrived, and I asked for the check," recounted Schuerholz. "But to our surprise, the restaurant man-

August 2004

Inducted into the Braves Hall of Fame along with Pete Van Wieren, Tommy Holmes and Kid Nichols.

Sept. 30, 2007

Final TBS game.

July 31, 2008

Final Braves broadcast, on WGST radio.

Aug. 3, 2008

Died at home in Atlanta.

broadcast booth with his father and sons... dressed in costume for Halloween... and, of course, playing with his grandchildren.

Caray's life was filled with memorable moments. The son of iconic, Hall of Fame broadcaster, Harry Caray, he managed to revel in his father's fame while still creating his own successful career.

Born Aug. 12, 1939, to Harry and Dorothy Caray in St. Louis, Missouri, Caray was around baseball and sports most of his life. He loved to play sports. He was considered a star football player in high school and college, and he loved to be around athletes. His father, then a broadcaster with the St. Louis Cardinals, took him to spring training and the ballpark, and many Cardinals greats filled his family photo albums and his memories.

After graduating from the University of Missouri with a degree in journalism, Caray began his professional career, broadcasting games for the Southern Independent League Tulsa Oilers in

Jason Deal The Blackshear (Ga.) Times

"Behind the mike, Skip had a conversation with the listener and talked about baseball. The conversation was always one-sided, but when you can make it seem one-on-one, that makes you a master at it. Skip was that kind of broadcaster, and his many honors proved it."

Cindy Hines. He also had seven grandchildren.

The outpouring of affection for Caray began immediately after his death was announced. It was the lead story in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution the next morning and on all the local news broadcasts. The word reached the Braves players and coaches as they were flying from Atlanta to San Francisco.

"It was a long, difficult week," said Van Wieren.

"I don't think it really sunk in until we got back here to Turner Field," said Joe Simpson, who worked with Caray for 17 seasons.

Both men delivered emotional tributes to Caray on the radio and on television prior to the game the night after he died. Simpson and his broadcast partner, Jon Sciambi, narrated classic Caray moments for viewers and unapologetically reminisced throughout the broadcast.

Back in Atlanta, plans were made for several private and public memorial services. At noon on Aug. 7, approximately 30 to 40 family and close friends celebrated Caray's life at a graveside service at Arlington Memorial Park in north Atlanta. Paula, the children and grandchildren were joined by Caray's sister, Pat Caray of Stratford, Connecticut, and sister-in-law Diana Caray, of St. Louis, and some of Caray's nieces and nephews. Schuerholz and his wife, Karen, former Braves pitcher Camp,

Turner Sports producer Glenn Diamond, his wife, Nancy, and daughters, Ashley and Jessica, were also in attendance.

Following that brief service, the family hosted a reception at their home in northwest Atlanta. Caray's beloved dogs roamed the house, and guests sat on the patio overlooking the backyard, appropriately watching the birds.

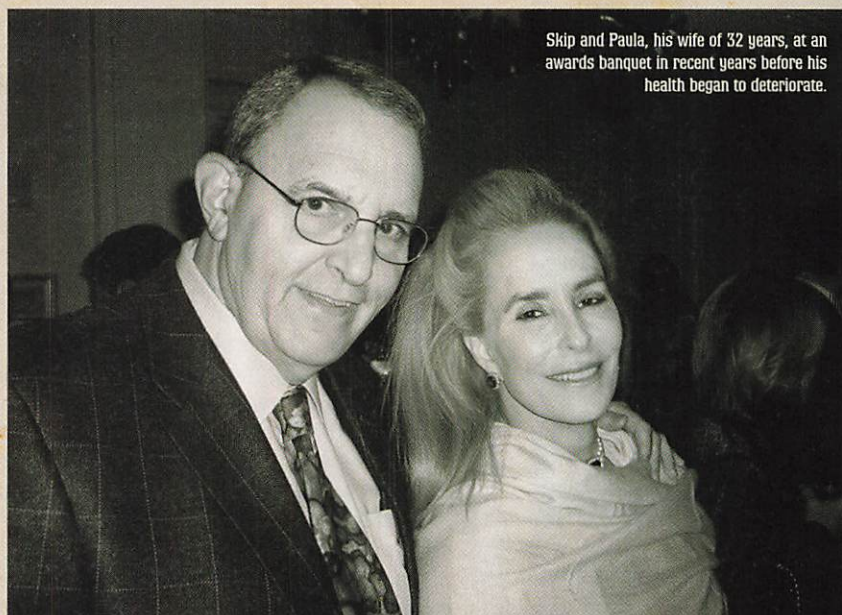
Though the last year of his life was marked by chronic illness, including a bad scare in October 2007 when he nearly died and another setback this past spring, Caray returned to work because he loved broadcasting baseball and loved his co-workers.

In the May '08 issue of ChopTalk, he wrote in his column, "When work starts, it's a God send. You feel lousy, you feel tired. But once the game starts, I'm pretty good."

His brushes with death gave him a new perspective.

"I think I was like most people, maybe a little afraid of death," he wrote in CT. "Not any more. I've had a great 68 years, great parents and family, a wonderful career."

As his friend Jiggs McDonald said about Caray, "Every man dies. Not every man lives. My friend Skip lived."



Skip and Paula, his wife of 32 years, at an awards banquet in recent years before his health began to deteriorate.

PATTY RASMUSEN

1963. He announced Atlanta Crackers baseball games and basketball games for St. Louis University, and in 1967, joined the NBA's St. Louis Hawks broadcast team, moving to Atlanta when the team relocated there in 1968.

In Atlanta, Caray hit his professional stride, working in practically every sport, collegiate and professional. He joined the Turner Broadcasting System (TBS) in 1972, broadcasting Hawks games, and in 1976, was added to Atlanta Braves telecasts. Alongside his broadcast partners Ernie Johnson and Pete Van Wieren, the latter with whom he worked for 33 years, Caray helped create "America's Team" on TBS, generating legions of fans from across the nation.

He earned awards and accolades including a Georgia-area Emmy, was named Georgia Sportscaster of the Year six times, and was inducted into the Braves Hall of Fame with Van Wieren in 2004.

But Caray's greatest joy was his family. He and Paula were married 32 years, and they had four children, sons Chip and Josh, both in broadcasting, and daughters Shayelyn Woodbery and

Best Friends

By Pete Van Wieren

*On The Air (And Off),
We Had a Treat Time
- Every Day -
For Nearly 5,000 Games*

I first met Skip Caray on a December day in 1975 when the new Braves broadcast team was being introduced to the media. A door prize drawing was a part of the program, and Ernie Johnson asked me - the new guy in town - to do the honors. I reached into the fishbowl and pulled out a card. But I was unable to decipher the handwriting on the card.

After several attempts to read the name, I called Ernie back to the microphone, handed him the card and stepped back. As I did so, Skip sidled up to me and whispered, "So far, you're doing a wonderful job." That little dig began a 33-year association that ended with Skip's untimely passing on August 3.

Ours was more than a broadcast partnership - it was a friendship that extended well beyond the booth. Our wives became good friends - our kids got to know each other - we became grandparents for the first time just one day apart. While we all have our favorite memories of Skip as a broadcaster, mine include parties, dinners, card games and who knows how many million miles spent on airplanes.

As a broadcaster, Skip was a true original. His wit - "If you promise to patronize our sponsors, you have our permission to walk the dog" - his playfulness - "That foul ball was caught by a fan from Snellville" - his ability to capture the moment - "Braves win, Braves win, Braves win, Braves win, Braves win!" - were second to none.

We often receive tapes from aspiring young broadcasters asking us to critique their work. Many of them are trying to sound like Vin Scully or Al Michaels or some other famous voice. But you never get one from somebody trying to sound like Skip. Because no one can.

I think what I'll remember most about him is his mischievousness - Skip loved to push the envelope to the very edge. One night, there was a joke he wanted to tell on the air - but it was a little risqué, and we convinced him not to. During the broadcast, he came up with the idea to tell just the punch line, which by

itself was harmless. Thus began several weeks of telling only the punch line to some of the raunchiest jokes on the planet. Fans were even sending us their favorites.

In the late '70s, the Atlanta Constitution ran a story about poor attendance at Braves games. The story also said that few were watching the games on TV. Skip didn't believe that, and on that day's telecast gave out the telephone number to the newspaper and urged everyone watching to call the paper and let them know. The response overloaded the switchboard at the Constitution.

But behind all that playfulness was a dedicated broadcaster. I often heard Skip tell interviewers his broadcast philosophy, and it was a simple one - "Tell the truth - have some fun." And that was how Skip did his job.

If it bothered him that a game was a couple of minutes late getting started - he told you so. If he thought an umpire missed a call - he let you know. While he was 100 percent behind the Braves, he wouldn't hesitate to criticize a player, when necessary.

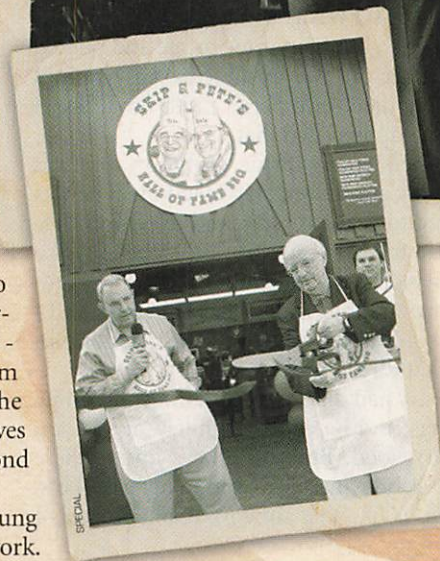
This honesty, combined with his wit and his quickness, made him a legend, not only in Atlanta, but all across the country, thanks to the Superstation. He had that rare ability to keep viewers tuned in to the game, even when it was a blowout, just to hear what he would say next.

By my count, we worked nearly 5,000 games together, and it never got old. Every day was a new adventure - every day there was something new to laugh about - and win or lose, we had a great time, every day.

Now that he's gone, I've been trying to think of the best way to say good-bye. But Skip Caray will always be with us. Every day we will hear that voice - remember that wit - recall that attitude.

So instead of good-bye, I'll just say thank you. Thank you, Skip, for letting all of us be a part of your life. Thanks for letting us share the ride. We will never forget you.

Whether they were on the air, being inducted into the Braves Hall of Fame, or selling BBQ in the Turner Field Plaza, Pete and Skip were almost constant companions.



ALBION SHARRIS

SPECIAL

Memories

Compiled by Patty Rasmussen

Many things have been said and written about Skip Caray since his death. The portrait that emerged is of an individual as loving as he was irascible, fun-loving and professional. Caray was a complex man, who is best described by the people who knew him, worked with him, and appreciated him.

Stan Kasten

Washington Nationals President; Former President Atlanta Braves and Atlanta Hawks

I had the cubby-hole right next to Skip when we worked for the Atlanta Hawks in 1977. We did dish it out and take it! I still have a file of caustic, acerbic notes he'd leave me. He'd bang them out on his typewriter.

I arrived with the Braves in November 1986. We were in the throes of some bad baseball. Were there times I wanted him to cool it with the negative commentary? Every day!

In all the talk about Skip, we shouldn't overlook his technical brilliance. The (1992) Sid Bream call should be taught in every journalism school. It's the perfect clip of a big moment, and Skip handled it perfectly. He set the stage, he gave the baseball nuts and bolts, all the information needed to understand what was about to happen, and then he let the moment speak.

I'm not sure what I'll miss most about Skip, but when I look through my files of notes from him, I'm sure I'll figure something out! As many of the testimonials as we'll hear, I think Skip would have enjoyed a roast even more!

Glenn Diamond

TBS Producer

Skip was who he was and didn't make any apologies for it. He was a guy who came to the line, a lot. Sometimes he'd take a step over it and look around, just to see if you were paying attention. He was about the truth and honesty in his broadcasts.

Nobody had better timing than Skip. He knew when to speak and when not to speak and when to let the crowd speak. He understood baseball situations and probability of outcomes.

He was very intelligent, but also smart enough to know when he was in one of those important moments. In the Sid

Bream call, I think the most important moment was when he said, "There's a lotta room in left-center field. If he hits one there, we'll be dancing in the streets."

He had a huge impact in my life. The last time I saw him, he came to my birthday party the week before he died. He and Paula came to my house on a Wednesday. It was huge to have him there, and it meant so much. But the happiest to see him was my dog, Daisy. She always ate better when Skip was around!

Phil Niekro

Hall of Fame Pitcher 1964-83, '87

The night we won the pennant (division) in 1982, I was sitting on the trainer's table with Gene Garber when I heard Skip's voice. He'd come in looking for me, and he was saying, "Where's my friend? Where's my friend? Knucksie?" It meant a lot to me that he was looking for me.

Ernie Johnson

Braves Hall of Fame Broadcaster

In 1991, I wasn't a member of the broadcast crew, but Skip came to me and offered to let me call two or three of "his" innings during the World Series radio broadcast. I always appreciated that.

When young Ernie (Johnson Jr.) was looking at a career, Skip asked me if he was going to get into radio and television. "He ought to," Skip said. "He's got a better voice than you and me put together!" I went home and told Ernie what Skip said, and I think it was the final thing that pushed him in that direction.

Skip had his own little way of doing things, and he could definitely needle you pretty good. But you always knew where you stood with Skip. I said to my wife, Lois, "Skip is like that song by Frank Sinatra, 'I did it my way.'"

Dale Murphy

Braves Hall of Famer 1976-90

He was hired by TBS the same year (1976) I made my major league debut. I was interviewed by him countless times, and I always had to be ready for his jokes. He usually began by asking how many doughnuts I ate before batting practice!

As I got to know him, it was obvious that he enjoyed making people smile, and that was tough to do during those years. We put his wit to good use. But he was professional in every sense of the word. I'm just glad the last 15 years of his time with the Braves made the first 15 years worth it!

Treg Olson

Braves Catcher 1990-1993

When you listened to Skip, you knew you were hearing one of the purest of the pure baseball guys. He was both a student and educator of the game. He was intelligent and passionate about baseball.

Mark Lemke

Braves Second Baseman, 1988-97; Current Member of Broadcast Team

I worked with him in the booth back in 2003, and he helped me a lot. One time - I'll never forget it - the inning was ready to start, and he had a big hotdog in his hand. Just as the producer said we were on the air, he practically stuck the entire hotdog in his mouth and looked at me like, "I can't talk - it's all yours!" So, I had to start the play by play. The whole time, he had a big grin on his face. It was like a rookie player being welcomed into the big leagues. He said, "That's how you learn. You're gonna learn on the job." His dad or someone else probably did that to him when he was starting.

CONDOLENCES

Fans who would like to express sympathy to Skip Caray's family should address cards to: Caray Family, c/o Atlanta Braves, P.O. Box 4064, Atlanta, Ga. 30302.

The Caray family asks that anyone wishing to make a donation in Skip's memory send it to one of the following charitable organizations:

Camp Twin Lakes

camptwinlakes.org
P.O. Box 933507
Atlanta, Ga. 31193-3507

Winship Cancer Institute

cancer.emory.edu
Plaza 1000
762 Clifton Rd.
Atlanta, Ga. 30322-4001

Friends House

(will only accept donations online)
smalldoghumane.org

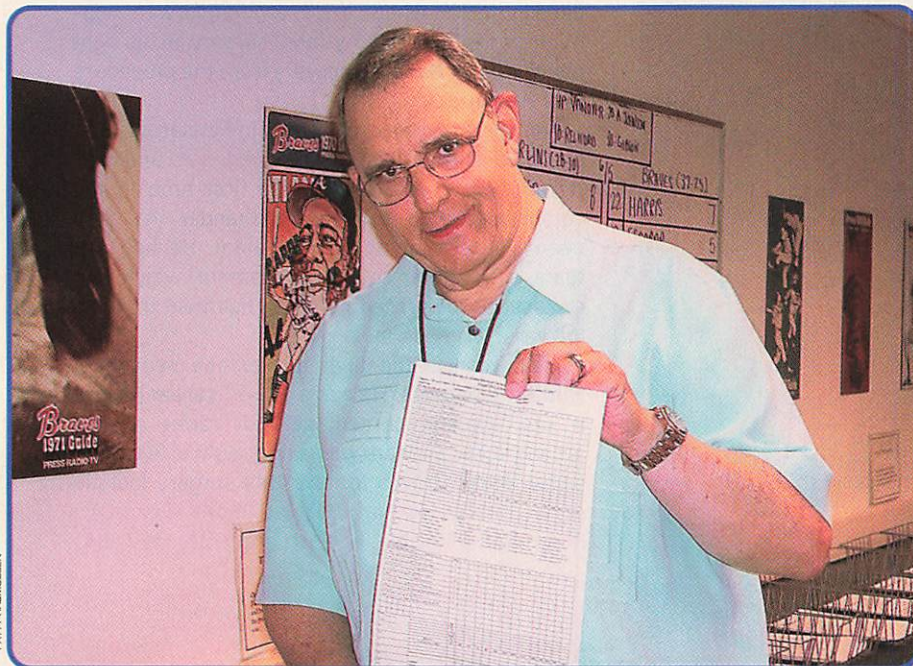
PAINTING THE CORNERS

BY JAY BUSBEE



HEAVEN'S GOT A HECKUVA BROADCASTER

Skip belonged in the ballpark, high above home plate, putting the balls and strikes into perspective for all of us.



PATTY HANSEN

THERE'S A PART OF ME that still refuses to believe Skip Caray is no longer with us, that if I search the dozens of radio and TV stations that carry Braves games in any given season, I'll finally track him down.

But no, he's gone, and even his broadcast partners would agree that Braves games will be missing something essential without him.

I grew up hearing Skip Caray's voice summer after summer, piping out of my dad's radio as he did yardwork or toted us along on errands. Sometimes, Skip sounded cranky, sometimes bored, sometimes like he was privy to a joke none of the rest of us heard or understood.

But he never for an instant sounded like he didn't love what he was doing – even if the game before him that night made him want to lose his lunch. (I still haven't figured out how he knew the hometown of every fan that caught a foul ball. That's a skill he should have taken to Vegas.)

It wasn't until much later that I realized announcers generally weren't "supposed" to be such staunch advocates for their teams. But Skip, who made every broadcaster this side of the Georgia Bulldogs' Larry Munson seem completely impartial, never subscribed to that approach, and we as fans were the luckier for it.

If the team stunk, he'd say so, in easily

imitated but never-duplicated style. If he was having problems with his broadcast bosses, he'd let them have it right there on the air, knowing full well which way the sympathies of the listeners would run.

And when callers to his radio show asked, yet again, how the infield fly rule works or what the "magic number" is, he made no attempt to disguise how disgusted he was by having to answer the same questions, night after night. Didn't anybody ever listen to him?

We all did, through those long dark pre-'91 days. We're all in this together, he seemed to be saying. And when he made his occasional forays into other sports – Hawks basketball, for instance – it never sounded quite right.

The frenetic pace of Hawks games didn't suit Skip's style. It was like B.B. King trying to play with Jay-Z. He belonged in the ballpark, high above home plate, putting the balls and strikes into perspective for all of us.

And when the Braves finally did achieve post-season success, you got the feeling that Skip, Pete Van Wieren and Ernie Johnson deserved it almost as much as the players. They'd had to watch all those years of wretched baseball, watch and somehow draw something redeeming out of it all, and it had all finally paid off.

After the Braves won Game 3 of the 1991 World Series, that dramatic 12-inning affair, Skip closed the jubilant broadcast with an offhand, "Same two teams back here tomorrow night." Like it was a mid-week June series against the Expos instead of the most important game in Atlanta's history.

"Act like you been there before," as legendary Alabama football coach Bear Bryant used to say.

Only, Skip hadn't been there before, at least not with the Braves, and neither had we. All of us knew it, and all of us loved it. And that was part of what made his post-season work so enjoyable, the fact that he never seemed to take any of the team's decade-plus of success for granted.

Every October in the '90s, I – and, I'd imagine, most of you – turned off the sound on the television to listen to Skip's broadcast on the radio. No disrespect intended to CBS, Fox, or ESPN, but listening to some "outside" broadcaster for the most critical games of the year would be like having a stand-in play "Tony" in the final episode of *The Sopranos*. We'd come all this way together with Skip. He knew all the storylines and the inside jokes, and we were all part of the whole affair together.

Thanks to ChopTalk, I had the great good fortune to get to meet Skip in person in the Braves press box, and over the last few years, spent many a late-night post-game session listening to him poke fun at himself and those around him. To have Skip say your name was something special. To have him make fun of the pattern on your shirt capped off even the most wretched game on a high note.

The last time I spoke to him, just five days before he died, I asked him for his cell phone number to follow up on some work. Taking on an air of mock surprise, his eyes widened and he laughed, in his best Southern-debutante style, "This is all happening so fast!"

And it was over too soon.

Skip, on behalf of all your fans, from Winder to Waycross, from Opp to Okaloosa, we're going to miss you.

HUDSON OUT A YEAR



PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

THE EPIDEMIC of injuries to strike the Braves dealt its most crippling blow, one that will extend deep into 2009, when **Tim Hudson** underwent ligament transplant (Tommy John) surgery on his right elbow Aug. 8. Normal recovery from the procedure is at least a year.

The operation was performed in Pensacola, Fla., by noted surgeon Dr. **James Andrews** and was termed a success. This is the first time in the career of the 33-year-old righthander that he's been disabled for an arm problem. He had two tears in the ulnar collateral ligament, which was replaced in the procedure with a ligament from his left wrist.

Next year is the final guaranteed season of Hudson's contract. He has a 146-77 career record, a .655 winning percentage that ranks second among active pitchers with a minimum of 200 decisions. Other Braves to have this surgery include **John Smoltz**, **Rafael Soriano**, **Mike Gonzalez**, **Jorge Campillo**, **Jeff Bennett** and **Kelly Johnson**.

Tim Hudson won't be having any more meetings on the mound with Brian McCann until sometime late next season.

IN THE "W" COLUMN

Mike Hampton got his first win since Aug. 14, 2005, by beating the Giants, 11-4, in San Francisco Aug. 5. He worked seven innings, giving up four hits, two runs (earned) and a walk. He struck out two and allowed single runs in the fifth and seventh innings. The lefty, who turns 36 this month, threw 90 pitches, 59 for strikes. He also contributed an RBI double in the fifth. **Bobby Cox** lifted him after seven innings, during which he recorded 13 of 21 outs via groundballs. It was the first time since May 9, 2005, that Hampton worked more than five innings. He'd been battling through numerous injuries and surgeries since having Tommy John surgery Sept. 26, 2005. He is in the final season of his contract.

DEADLINE DEAL

For the second straight season, **Mark Teixeira** was on the move at the trading deadline. With free agency in Teixeira's future at the end of the season and the Braves struggling on the field, Frank Wren elected to send the switch-hitting first baseman to the Angels in exchange for 25-

year-old first baseman **Casey Kotchman** and pitching prospect **Steve Marek** on July 29, two days before the non-waiver trading deadline.

In 157 games with the Braves since being acquired from Texas last July 31 along with lefty **Ron Mahay** in exchange for five prospects, Teixeira had 37 home runs and 134 RBIs. However, the Braves were not able to round into post-season form during that time.

Kotchman, a left-handed hitter and former first-round draft pick (2001), was one of the top hitters in the Angels' lineup and is not eligible for free agency until after the 2011 season. At the time of the trade, he led the Angels in hits (107), was tied for the team lead in RBIs (54), was the toughest hitter to strike out in the AL, and owned a .997 career fielding percentage. See pages 24-26 for much more on Kotchman.

Marek, 24, is a power pitcher who was being converted from a starter to a reliever by the Angels. He was 2-6 with three saves and a 3.66 ERA and .223 opponents' batting average in 34 games at Double-A Arkansas

at the time of the trade. The Braves assigned him to Mississippi, where he was working out of the bullpen.

KNOCKOUT

Brian McCann was briefly knocked unconscious and sustained a mild concussion July 27 when he was bowled over at the plate by Phillies outfielder **Shane Victorino** in a helmet-to-helmet collision in Philadelphia. McCann took a throw from **Jeff Francoeur**, and just as he turned to make the tag, Victorino arrived, causing the catcher to drop the ball. He was examined on the field by trainer **Jeff Porter** before walking off, and X-rays taken at the stadium were negative. McCann sat out seven games, returning Aug. 4.

ON THE MOVE

Chipper Jones was put on the disabled list July 28 (retroactive to July 24) with a strained left hamstring, and he was activated Aug. 8 at Arizona, where he hit a home run in his first game back.



In other roster moves, **Rafael Soriano** (elbow) was activated from the DL July 21, but after making five appearances, he went back on the DL for the third time this year Aug. 3. Examination continued to show no structural damage. He was to begin a throwing program, and if pain persists, exploratory surgery will be considered.

Vladimir Nunez was designated for assignment when Soriano was activated, and he accepted assignment to Richmond. Omar Infante was activated from the DL July 22, and **Brent Lillibridge** was optioned to Richmond.

On July 26, **Mike Hampton** was activated, and **Charlie Morton** was optioned to Richmond, but Morton was called back two days later when **Tim Hudson** went on the DL. Also on July 28, **Jo-Jo Reyes** was optioned to Richmond, **Jeff Bennett** was activated, and **Clint Sammons** was called up from Richmond.

Corky Miller was designated for assignment Aug. 1, and **Chuck James** was recalled from Richmond. **Royce Ring** was designated for assignment Aug. 2, and Nunez's contract was purchased from Richmond. **Francisley Bueno's** contract was purchased from Richmond Aug. 3 when Soriano went back on the DL. Miller and Ring accepted assignment to Richmond. On Aug. 8 when Jones was activated. James was optioned to Richmond.

SHORT HOPS

Brian McCann is just the third catcher in history to have two 20-home run seasons before the age of 25. The other two are Hall of Famers **Johnny Bench** and **Gary Carter**.

Tom Glavine, out since June 10 due to a partially torn tendon in his elbow, was scheduled to return to the starting rotation Aug. 14 after making two rehab starts at Class-A Myrtle Beach.

The strained ligament in **Matt Diaz's** left knee is healed but he remained on the DL at press time due an inflamed nerve in the knee

Mark Kotsay's homer Aug. 7 at Arizona was the first by a Braves outfielder since **Greg Norton** on July 19 and was only the 21st homer by a Braves outfielder all season. That ranked last in the majors.

SKIP HELPED BRING FANS CLOSER TO THE FRANCHISE

MY FIRST YEAR HERE (1999), Skip and I were out on our caravan together. I was the keynote speaker, and Skip was emcee at a banquet for our Greenville (S.C.) club.

We started at a children's hospital, and there were three or four players along. The players had on uniforms so people would know who they were. A nurse came up and said, "The players go over there," and to me and Skip, "You coaches come with me." When we got off the elevator, I said, "After you, Coach." And ever since, we called each other "Coach" every day.

That night at the banquet, Skip introduced me, and when I got up to speak. I said, "I've got to tell you a story about what happened today." I related that story and said, "We always look at Skip as our offensive line coach - at times his lines are more offensive than others."

He died laughing, and we really hit it off after that. It was the beginning of a good friendship that made going to the park and watching games a lot more fun. Those who interacted with him regularly are really going to miss him. That includes those who watched him on television and listened to him on radio.

I think having a broadcast team like Pete and Skip that people identified with and felt like family brought the fans closer to the franchise. It's hard to put a value on that, other than to say it's a special memory.

Skip was not afraid to go a little further than he should at times, and that's part of what made him so entertaining.

I thought the memorial service at the church was appropriate and in the vein that Skip would have appreciated and loved. It was very well done. And I think the events we had at Turner Field were well received and heart-felt by the fans. In keeping with his personality and desire to have fun, the stories lifted people's spirits.

We dedicated the broadcast booth in his name in a pre-game ceremony, and we gave Paula, his wife, a jersey with his name on it. We had a pre-game video, and in lieu of sponsors on the big board during the game, we showed clips of Skip to the fans.

I RELATED THAT STORY AND SAID, 'WE ALWAYS LOOK AT SKIP AS OUR OFFENSIVE LINE COACH - AT TIMES HIS LINES ARE MORE OFFENSIVE THAN OTHERS.'

We like Casey Kotchman a lot, and he's someone we can have for a long time, because he's under control for three years after this. He's a quality player, very good defensively, and though he's already good offensively, we think the best is yet to come. He has a lot of upside, and we are thrilled to have him.

He's a great piece to add to the club to start moving forward for the 2009 season. He's one of those guys who immerses himself in the game, and our scouts think he'll get better and better. If we kept Mark Teixeira for the rest of the season, we were faced with only getting a draft pick or two for losing him. With this opportunity to get a player who will be on the field for us for a long time, it was a very easy decision.

We approached Teixeira and his agent, Scott Boras, back in spring training with what we thought was a very sizable offer that would have made him one of the higher-paid players in the game. Over the course of the spring, they did not accept our offer or even negotiate off of it. So, we realized we were not going to be able to re-sign Mark and would have to win with him in 2008. Then when the injuries started mounting, we realized that wasn't going to happen. We didn't want to lose him just for draft picks.

TOY STORY



THE BRAVES brought "Christmas in July" to Atlanta area children's hospitals on July 30, when players, coaches, broadcasters and some of their wives distributed toys and visited with patients. Those participating included: **Brian** and **Ashley McCann**, **Jeff** and **Catie Francoeur**, **Kelly** and **Lauren Johnson**, **Mike Gonzalez**, **Gregor Blanco**, **Greg Norton**, **Clint Sammons**, **Will** and **Allyson Ohman**, **Matt** and **Leslee Diaz**, **Tricia** and **Royce Ring**, **Blaine** and **Ginsey Boyer**, **Ruben Gotay**, **Brian** and **Veronica Snitker**, **Joe Simpson**, **Chip Caray** and Latino broadcaster **Fernando Palacios**. They visited Egleston, Scottish Rite, and Hughes Spalding hospitals.

Hundreds of toys were collected earlier in the season at Turner Field by the Braves' Wives during their annual toy drive.

Gregor Blanco (L) and Mike Gonzalez brighten a patient's day with Christmas in July spirit.

TRUE BLUE (AND RED)

The Braves' string of division titles has stopped, but the loyalty of Braves fans remains strong. According to a recent study by Forbes magazine, the Braves have the third-most-loyal fans in Major League Baseball. Only the Texas Rangers (1) and Boston Red Sox (2) rank ahead of the Braves, based on an analysis of how attendance fluctuated with winning percentage, beginning in 1991. Factors such as new stadiums and increases in ticket prices were taken into consideration.

Forbes said, "Through the use of multiple regression analysis, we determined how quickly fans supported the team when they started winning and how quickly they dissipated once performance slumped. The faster that fans boosted attendance and the more hastily they abandoned poor performance indicated fans who were less loyal."

The Cubs (4) and Pirates (5) ranked right behind the Braves. The "least loyal" fans, according to Forbes, belong to the Angels, followed by the Tigers and A's. The Phillies have the least loyal fans in the NL, the analysis concludes.

BASEBALL POINTERS

Braves players, coaches and broadcasters led a "Nuestro Campo" baseball clinic for 100 Latino youth on July 18, on **John**

Smoltz Field at the Atlanta Braves Baseball Academy at the Villages of Carver YMCA. The youth, ages 11-13, from the Latin American Association, received batting, fielding, pitching and baserunning instruction from **Jorge Campillo**, **Omar Infante**, **Eddie Perez** and **Chino Cadahia**.

After the clinic, Latino broadcasters **Fernando Palacios** and **Pete Manzano** took part in a Q & A session with the youth about the history of Latinos in Major League Baseball and their contributions to the game.



Jorge Campillo helped give Latino youngsters baseball tips during a clinic at the Villages of Carver YMCA.

JURRJENS HONORED

Jair Jurrjens was presented with the National League Rookie of the Month Award for June on July 29 before the

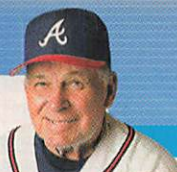
Braves-Cardinals at Turner Field. A \$5,000 donation from award sponsor Gillette was made in Jurrjens' name to the Villages of Carver Family YMCA to support youth baseball and softball at the Atlanta Braves Baseball Academy.

In four June starts, Jurrjens posted a 3-0 record and a 1.63 ERA. Atlanta won all four of the games started by the Curacao native. The 22-year-old did not surrender an earned run in his final three starts in June, spanning 21.2 innings in which he yielded just 14 hits. Overall, the righthander struck out 18 in 27.2 innings, allowing 25 hits, seven walks and just one home run.

BALLS & STRIKES

The final Power Lunch of the season is scheduled Sept. 11 at Maggiano's in Buckhead (3368 Peachtree Rd.). Tickets are \$35, and proceeds benefit the Braves Foundation. Order tickets by calling (404) 614-1370 or visit braves.com/powerlunch.

Mike Hampton's annual Concert in the Canyon, made possible by his Pitching-In Foundation, will be held Dec. 6 at Rock Crusher Canyon in Crystal River, Fla. **Hank Williams Jr.** is the headline act and will be joined by **Jason Aldean**



and **Luke Bryan**. Tickets range from \$35 to \$75, with proceeds benefiting the community of Citrus County, Fla., through various programs, including academic scholarships. Visit mikehamptonpitchingin.com for information. Tickets can be purchased through Ticketmaster.

Yunel Escobar received the Major League Baseball Players Alumni Association's "Heart and Hustle Award" in a pre-game ceremony Aug. 15. The award honors an active player who demonstrates a passion for baseball and best embodies the values, spirit and tradition of the game.

Fans can bring their canine friends to Turner Field Sept. 7 for Bark in the Park when the Braves host the Washington Nationals. Pre-registration is required. Visit braves.com for information.

Hemophilia of Georgia will host the 26th Annual Hit 'Em for Hemophilia Golf Tournament on Oct. 28 at Château Élan Winery and Resort in Braselton, Ga. More than 400 corporate executives, local and sports celebrities, and invited guests are expected to participate in the event which also features an awards banquet, live auction and raffle. The tournament supports research directed toward finding a cure for hemophilia, a hereditary blood clotting disorder that requires life-long medical treatment. AT&T Mobility is the platinum sponsor. Visit hog.org for more information or call (770) 518-8272.

John Smoltz autographed items for fans that donated canned food to the Strike Out Hunger Food Drive Aug. 2 in Turner Field's Monument Grove. Strike Out Hunger is a program of the Atlanta Community Food Bank. Fans received one autograph for 25 cans or \$25 or two autographs for 50 cans or \$50.

One of the best Alumni Meet and Greets of the season is scheduled Sept. 21 when **Gene Garber**, **Bruce Sutter** and **Bob Horner** are scheduled to appear from 11:30-12:30 in Fan Plaza. Garber was the franchise all-time saves leader until **John Smoltz** passed him. Sutter was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame last year. And Horner is one of the top right-handed home run hitters in Atlanta history.

I'M JUST HEARING SOME OF SKIP'S GREAT CALLS

WE'RE ALL FEELING THE LOSS of our great friend and broadcaster Skip Caray. I first met Skip in the winter of 1977 when the Braves first hired me. I met him while we were doing the Braves caravans and luncheons and banquets at night. I got to know him as a friend, and what a great guy he was.

We'd known each other for 31 years, so learning of his passing was a shocker, completely unexpected.

The night we were on the flight from Atlanta to San Francisco, Aug. 3, was when we found out. Brad Hainje, our public relations director, got an e-mail while we were flying. He came to tell me, and we talked for a few minutes and decided that I would go to the back to tell Pete Van Wieren. It was not a good flight, to say the least, but there were two hours left in our flight, and it gave us all a chance to talk about Skip.

A lot of us attended the memorial service for Skip after we got back from the road trip. I thought it was terrific and actually uplifting. We miss him. We miss his humor and the little zingers he'd shoot at you and that you could never get the best of him. It was impossible.

He was so well known throughout the sports world, not just in baseball. I'm just now getting to hear some of the calls he made. When you play or manage, working during the game, you never hear that. I'm not one to go back and watch a video of our games, no matter how good we did. Now I'm beginning to hear these calls on a daily basis as I've watched some of the coverage and tributes, and they are terrific!

It's no surprise that he was so popular a broadcaster. He had a great run, especially along with Ernie and Pete. The good work will continue, but we'll miss Skip. He was exactly what you saw. He was the same guy on and off the air.

"WE MISS HIS HUMOR AND THE LITTLE ZINGERS HE'D SHOOT AT YOU AND THAT YOU COULD NEVER GET THE BEST OF HIM."

September callups will be a little different this year, because they'll probably include a lot of the same kids we've already seen up here because of all the injuries. There are going to be a lot of familiar names and faces.

We made a good trade at the July 31 deadline in getting Casey Kotchman. He's a good defensive first baseman, just like Mark Teixeira, though he doesn't have Teixeira's power. I think Casey has a chance to out-hit Teixeira, line-drive wise and average-wise.

He's a solid major league player. Casey is all baseball. We like what we've seen.

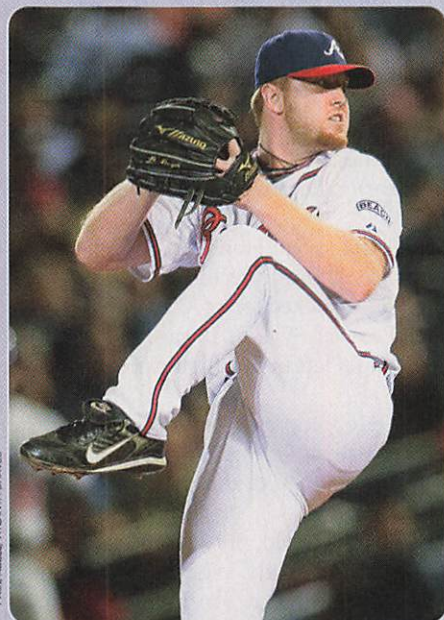
It has been a strange year for our starting pitching. We've had our ups and downs, but it was good to see Mike Hampton come back. The second outing, he pitched great and got the win. I'm very pleased with what he's done.

He's a bulldog. He's worked awfully hard. It's been difficult for him, because no one likes to sit and watch. I'm sure he felt it would never end, but it has. We'll see what happens next year. He's a free agent all of a sudden, and if he wants to pitch, he certainly should be able to and has the stuff to do it.

Losing Tim Hudson to season ending surgery was a big blow. Huddy pitched great, going out there every time, giving us a chance to win. He led the team in wins before he went on the disabled list. We hated to see him get hurt, but he's a competitor. He'll come back next season ready to pitch.

I think the best story of the season for the Braves, pitching or otherwise, is Jorge Campillo. He's a legitimate starting pitcher. The clubs we play have seen him more than once and still haven't figured him out. He understands pitching.

I think people watching him on television really enjoy watching him as a master at what he does with what he's got. He came in way under the radar!



PAUL ABELLY/ATLANTA BRAVES

INTERVIEW BY
PATTY RASMUSSEN

CHOPTALK: What's it been like to make the team out of spring training and stay healthy all season thus far?

BLAINE BOYER: It's been great! It's really what I knew I could do all along, but I had to get my arm back in shape after [shoulder] surgery (2006). So, I've had a lot of fun, but I'm still doing a lot of learning. A lot! I have good conversations with John Smoltz and Roger McDowell. I've learned a lot from both of them, and Smoltz picked up on some things in my delivery. We tweaked it a little, and I'm really seeing results.

CT: Can you be more specific? What did he see, and how did you adjust?

BOYER: It was really a matter of slowing my tempo down and using my front leg as leverage. My hips were clearing a little too early, and that left my arm just hanging out there. So, I've been working on this with John and Roger and putting it into practice out in Los Angeles and San Diego, and things really came together. John was watching the game, watched me pitch, and when I got back in, I had a bunch of text messages from him. He was really encouraging me and pumping me up. It's awesome.

Boyer was tied for the major league lead in appearances with 63 at press time.

CT: Redheads are known for having hot tempers. How about you? Do you have much of a temper?

BOYER: I really don't have a bad temper, though I can get pretty worked up every now and then. The thing I've learned is that King David was a redhead and he dominated Goliath, so now Terry Pendleton calls me "King David" and (Mike) Gonzalez will say to me in the bullpen, "Go get 'em, David," trying to fire me up. I think that's pretty cool.

CT: How old were you when you thought, "I'd like to be a major league ballplayer," and what made you think you could?

BOYER: I grew up in east Cobb County, and I grew up with Skyla Cox, Bobby Cox's daughter. She and I were in school together all the way through high school. In third grade, I told Skyla that one day I'd play for her dad. I don't know if I'd really decided to be a major league ballplayer or if I was just being an arrogant moron, but I stated it for the first time, then, which is kind of funny, really. Then when I got into high school, I needed to start getting serious. I think it was after my junior year that I really settled it in my mind and got down to business.

IN THIRD GRADE... I TOLD SKYLA (COX) THAT ONE DAY I'D PLAY FOR HER DAD.

CT: You were a centerfielder in high school. How and when did you switch to pitching?

BOYER: I switched after my senior year of high school. The Braves drafted me as a pitcher, so there really wasn't any choice. I'm very glad I don't play center field any more.

CT: Do you ever think "what if" when it comes to going to college? Do you wish you'd gone?

BOYER: I think if I had gone to college, I

still might have made it here. But since I was switching from a position player to a pitcher, I thought it best to get into the system in order for the Braves to mold me into the type of pitcher they wanted me to be. It was definitely the best decision for me at that time. Knowing what I know now, though, if I had a son who was good enough to play professional baseball, I would definitely steer him toward going to college. The money offered would have to be very, very good in order for me to direct my son toward signing out of high school. So many guys never even sniff the major leagues, and I think education is very, very important.

CT: Which person has been most influential in your baseball life?

BOYER: Starting out, I would say Kent Willis, my pitching coach in A-ball at Macon and then in Rome. Then he was my pitching coach again in Double-A ball at Mississippi. He really taught me mechanics and the basics. Then there are guys now, like Smoltz and Roger, who are helping me, talking me through the mental part of the game. I feel like Smoltz's influence is probably going to take me to the next level of my game.

CT: I know you have a good sense of humor, but what really makes you laugh?

BOYER: I laugh at almost everything, but I really like when people are in awkward situations. I love to watch people fall down. You know I watch that stuff and I imagine myself in those situations.

CT: If you like to watch people in awkward situations you must love watching the television show, *The Office*.

BOYER: It is, hands down, my favorite show on television! I love it. I laugh out loud when I watch it.

CT: I know you're a big outdoorsman, and your wife Ginsey is from a farm in South Georgia. Does she hunt, as well?

BOYER: She has hunted, but she doesn't hunt any more. She will come and sit with

me in a deer stand, and she's slopped through some swamps with me.

CT: Was a wife who could shoot a selling point for marriage?

BOYER: Finding a woman who would want to share those things, that I want to share those things with, is a "selling point." We like being together. Going with me to sit in a deer stand is something she does because I like it and we like being together. Look, I know I have the greatest wife ever, and I don't deserve her! We were talking recently and said we wish we had gotten married earlier. I knew when I met her, without a shadow of a doubt, that I wanted to marry her, and she felt the same way.

CT: You've been married a little over a year and a half...

BOYER: It's flown by! People say the first year is the hardest, and we feel like it's flown by. Ginsey really got to experience baseball for what it is during last season in Richmond. She rode the buses. And I'm thankful for that, and I know if you asked her, she would say that she wouldn't trade that experience for anything.

CT: What do you like best about your new house?

BOYER: I really like the fact that it has a basement and it will get used. I have a big ol' television and big ol' couch that are going down there, and I know I'll spend some time down there this off-season. It's great because we're back in east Cobb, in the same school district where I went to high school, in a pretty little neighborhood. We really love it. We were living in Canton, and the drive to the ballpark was long and gas prices were crazy. The move probably cut close to 30 minutes off my drive to the ballpark.

CT: So, you've got a "man room" in the basement, huh?

BOYER: Well, it will be as much of a "man room" as Ginsey can handle. Seriously, all my friends who knew me before I met Ginsey will tell you I was a slob. But not now. You should see me. I'm so organized. It's all due to Ginsey.

BATTER
UP!



MIKE HAMPTON

THE LONG ROAD BACK BOOSTS APPRECIATION

DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS, I never let myself believe that I wouldn't be able to pitch again. I always kept working toward the goal of getting back, and now that I'm back, I have to work toward being consistent and successful. All the work I put in was for those first moments on the mound in Philadelphia (July 26) and however much more time I'll have to keep playing.

Keeping my focus wasn't difficult, because I'm a ballplayer and that's how I'm programmed. I'm programmed to compete and play this game and to do anything and everything necessary to make that happen.

The motivation was the love of competition. The game has been great to me, and I owe it to the game and to the Braves, for the faith they've showed in me for so long. I still love playing, and I still believe I can contribute. I want to contribute. I'll play as long as I can, until the passion isn't there.

I've gotten quite a few of those "bumps in the road" out of the way. There aren't too many muscles left in my body to pull!

When I learned I was going to start in Philadelphia, I was talking to John Schuerholz and he said, "We're going to wrap you in bubble wrap between starts!"

It got to the point where I'd been pitching in the minor leagues and had tweaked this and that and I just told Roger McDowell, "Look, my arm is ready. If I'm going to start, I can do it just as well up here as down there." I'm glad he took the steps necessary to make it happen at this level. I needed to get in this environment and see what I could do.

I was more nervous the night before my first start than the actual day of the start. I think every start is like the opening kickoff of a football game. You have butterflies, and once the kickoff happens, everything else goes out the window and you're focused on competing and doing your job.

I took more time to soak in the "moment" prior to the second start in Atlanta (July 31). In the first start, there was still stuff going on, not knowing how I was going to feel, so I didn't give myself a chance to take in the moment. Before the second start, I took the time to look around and know that my kids were in the stands. It meant a lot to me to give them that.

Griffin is 8 and Gage is 12, and it's been a long time since they saw me play. Now they know that their dad doesn't just go to the field, work out, and sit on the bench. He's a player. It means a lot to me that I was able to come back when I did and that they were both there.

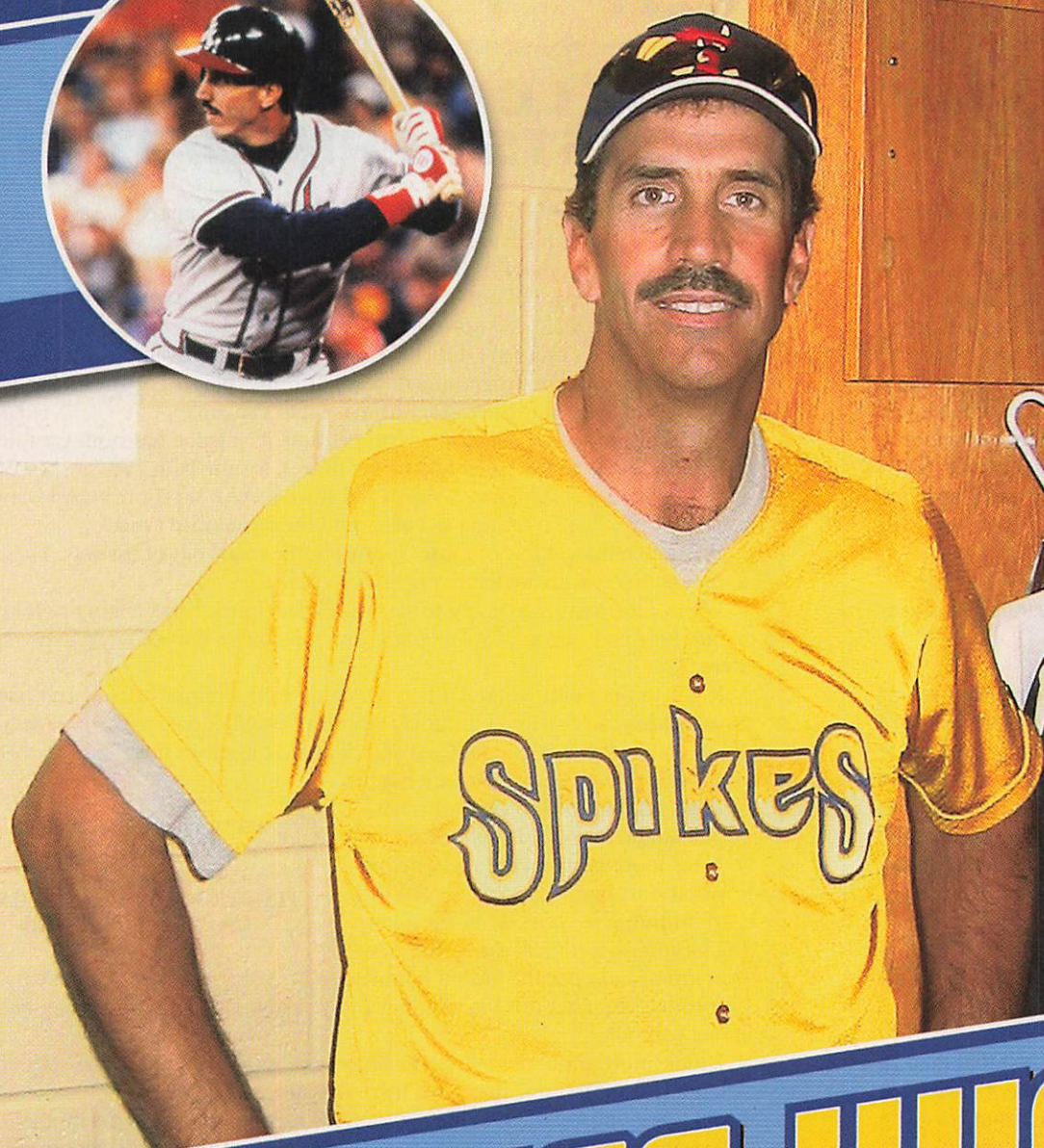
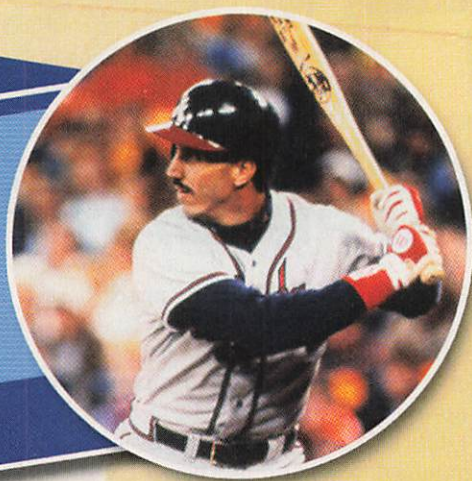
What I've gone through has been a great lesson for them. I always tell them we don't quit. When your back's up against the wall, regardless of all the adversity you're going to face, that's when you show the true character of your soul. I hope it's a lesson my sons have learned through this whole thing.

It felt good to get that double during my second start. Chipper Jones and I had a little conversation before I went out to hit. He said, "Some of these guys don't remember that you were a hitter. You might need to give them a refresher course!"

My confidence level is a work in progress. Confidence comes with success. I know it's going to take a little time. I know I'll get there, and the sooner, the better.

I know I've got some challenges ahead - mental, physical. I've got a lot of work to do to become consistent. I think I took the game for granted a little. I appreciate the game so much more now.

**I STILL LOVE PLAYING,
AND I STILL BELIEVE I
CAN CONTRIBUTE...
I'LL PLAY AS LONG AS I CAN,
UNTIL THE PASSION
ISN'T THERE.**



BRAVES WIN!

SID BREAM TRYING TO HELP PIRATES REVERSE THE "CURSE" HE HELPED CREATE IN 1992

EVEN FROM A DISTANCE, Braves fans would instantly recognize the lumbering stride. Sixteen years ago, it brought home one of the biggest runs in club history. Up close, there's no mistaking the signature mustache. Sid Bream is back in baseball.

Bream, who left the game after retiring in 1994, has returned to pro ball as hitting coach for the State College Spikes in the short-season Class-A New York-Penn League. He now works with young ballplayers getting their start in the Pittsburgh Pirates chain. Some had yet to reach kindergarten when he played first base for the Braves (1991-93).

"I've wanted to do it for a while," said the 48-year-old Bream, regarding his decision to enter coaching. "But at the same time, family was more important, and it still is. I had one son that was graduating from college this year and another that was going to college to play baseball. I have a 14-year-old son who loves this environment, and I have a little girl. I figured my window of opportunity was small. If I didn't start doing it at some point in time, I wasn't doing it."

Bream's slide to score the series-clinching run in Game 7 of the 1992 NLCS at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium remains etched in the minds of Braves fans. But when recalling his Atlanta days, he spoke mostly about the 1991 club.

"My favorite memory was the first year in 1991 when I got there," said Bream, who joined the club as a free agent before that season. "Slowly but surely, the players' attitudes changed that year, as far as how to go about playing the game. Then watching the fans' attitudes change and seeing the excitement that came over that city. That was an extremely exciting year for us as a team, as well as the city of Atlanta."

Bream's 1991 statistics (11 HR, 45 RBIs, .253 BA) hardly stand out. He missed time due to injuries and platooned at first base with Brian Hunter, which limited him to 265 at-bats. Nonetheless, his solid glove work and clubhouse presence helped the team go from 65-97 the previous year to 94-68 and a World Series appearance.

"Today I think GMs put too much credence in numbers, and they don't do a whole lot with the individual," said Bream. "Guys like Terry Pendleton and Rafael Belliard came in that year. They weren't arrogant, they weren't outspoken, and they weren't cocky guys. They knew how to win their games. I think that was such a great ingredient that John Schuerholz brought into that team. Pendleton took over the leadership role right away. He did such a great job of getting on guys when they needed it and praising guys if they did do well."

Pirates fans recall Bream as both a hero and a villain. He played a key role on their 1990 NL East Division Championship team. Just two years later as a Brave, "the slide" narrowly beat

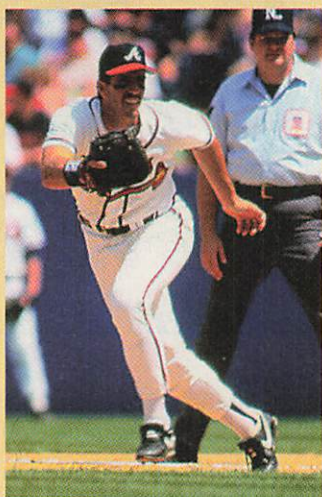
leftfielder Barry Bonds' throw to the plate and dashed the Bucs' World Series hopes. It was the first time in history that a team went from losing a post-season series to winning it on the last pitch of the series - and vice versa.

Pittsburgh entered the ninth inning with a 2-0 lead, only to see the Braves rally for three runs, the last two scoring on pinch-hitter Francisco Cabrera's two-out single. Bream's slide prompted the late Skip Caray's classic "Braves Win!" call.

The Pirates have never recovered. Since that moment, Pittsburgh



Bream (L), a first baseman for the Braves from 1991-93, chats with young Pirates' prospects during workouts in State College, Pa.



ATLANTA BRAVES

has yet to post another winning season.

Pirates director of player development Kyle Stark told Bream that when they hired him, half the calls the team received praised the decision and half could only talk about "The Bream Curse."

"It's still on a lot of people's minds," said Bream. "I get it constantly here. Guys come up and say to me, 'How dare you do that stuff to us?' That was a great time for me in my baseball career."

When told that some people claim Pirates catcher Mike LaValliere tagged him before he reached home, Bream set the record straight.

"I have a picture at home that shows my foot was on the plate before he tagged me," he said.

Bream's surroundings have changed dramatically from his playing days. He shares a small office with two other coaches. The Spikes' home ballpark, Medlar Field, holds 5,570 people. Adjacent to the immense Beaver Stadium, where the Penn State Nittany Lions play football, the three-year-old ballpark features a great mountain view beyond the outfield fence.

While Bream enjoys working with the young State College ballplayers, he admits that their frequent fielding mistakes and baserunning blunders get him down. The Spikes owned a dreadful 9-33 record just past the season's halfway point.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

"That gets difficult sometimes, but it's been a lot of fun working with them," said Bream. "It's just frustrating. I hate losing. Whenever they do things like that, it really gets under my skin, and I have to calm myself down some."

Bream begins working with the hitters around 1:30 for a 7 p.m. ballgame. While his early extra batting practice sessions are optional, most of the State College hitters usually participate. A couple hours later, when the team practices cutoffs and relay throws, Bream spends most of his time with the first basemen. When regular batting practice starts, he fixates on each player's swing mechanics, offering a mix of encouragement, instruction, and good-natured ribbing.

He kids second baseman Chad Rice about a piece of body armor. When they practice two-strike hitting, he tells outfielder Ciro Rosero, "short and sweet, short and quick." On the next pitch, Rosero blasts a shot off the left-field wall.

"He cares about each one of these guys and spends a lot of time with them," said Spikes manager Brad Fischer about

I'm taking in. We focus on the little things that first basemen have to deal with and take into account."

"Calvin and Sid have spent a lot of time together working on different things," said Fischer. "When you talk about the impact that Sid has had, that has probably been the biggest part of it. Because Calvin has improved 100 percent since he's been here. And Sid has spent much of his time working on that."

Bream lives 30 miles north of Pittsburgh in Zelienople, Pa. During the season, however, he stays in State College, which is about three hours east of his home. He enjoys hunting in the off-season. He also gives motivational speeches. He talked about his life since he last played for the Astros in 1994.

"I've been home working baseball clinics, working with my kids as far as going to their games," he said. "Speaking, hunting, and just enjoying my family. Then the last 3-4 years, I've been working with an elite high school baseball team and coaching them. I had a lot of fun with that, which led to getting into this."

Bream tries to keep up with the current Braves as much as

Bream: Eternally Linked To Caray

It only took a few seconds on October 14, 1992, to forever link the names of Sid Bream, Francisco Cabrera and Skip Caray. The day after Caray passed away at age 68, Bream remembered him as a tremendous announcer.

"His announcing made that 1992 play very popular for me," said Bream about Caray's famous call in the Braves' NLCS victory. "It's the words that he was able to come up with to make it such a spectacular memory."

While "The Slide" happened 16 years ago, Bream still hears fans quote Caray's words at speaking appearances and events.

"I don't know how many times I've gone to places and I hear people as I go to speak say: 'Braves win! Braves win! Braves win!'" said Bream from Ohio where he was on the road as hitting coach

with the Pittsburgh Pirates' short-season Class A farm team.

Bream drew a parallel to other great broadcasters while recalling Caray and his famous call.

"For Skip, that was *his* call. You think of Kurt Gowdy and Keith Jackson. Those guys, they had one time when they said something that is always going to be associated with them. That was Skip's call."

While the play itself already had so much drama and excitement, Bream believes Caray made it more memorable.

"When that play is shown, Skip Caray's call will always be played to make it even more dramatic," Bream said. "He was a fabulous announcer. The game of baseball is going to miss him tremendously."

- STEVE FALL



Bream. "Across the board, his influence is felt, as far as approach, thought process, and the mental part of hitting."

While he never posted big numbers (.264 career average in 12 seasons, .258 in three years with Atlanta), Bream didn't strike out much and took a smart approach at the plate. Spikes catcher Mark Carver, who grew up near Raleigh, N.C., recalls watching Bream as a young Braves fan. Now he and his teammates often sit next to him on bus rides to soak up knowledge.

The team has plenty of time to talk on those road trips. From State College, a central Pennsylvania city of 40,000, the Spikes travel to small towns like Oneonta, N.Y., and Lowell, Mass. They also venture to New York City to face the Brooklyn Cyclones and Staten Island Yankees. The season runs from June to September in the 14-team New York-Penn League. Most players come straight from college or the rookie leagues.

"He's influenced my game a lot," said Calvin Anderson, a 6-foot-7 first baseman from Southern University with tremendous power. "He's given me tons of information that I hadn't learned before about first base. Each day he teaches me new things that

possible, via newspapers and the internet. He has seen former teammates like John Smoltz, Tom Glavine, Jeff Blauser and Mark Lemke at different events through the years. He calls Pendleton from time to time, and was sad to hear about Smoltz's injury this past spring.

"They're always in the back of my mind, just because it was a team that I played for and thought a lot about," he said. "And the Braves really keep me in the loop. The front office people do a great job of getting us special events to celebrate that time frame. That's always been a lot of fun."

Bream has shared his future plans with both Stark and Pirates general manager Neal Huntington. He has set his sights on a return to the major leagues.

"I would like to do a couple years of hitting coach, and at that point in time, get into managing some," he said. "I'd like to pursue getting back to the big leagues. As soon as I can get back there, the better it would be for me."

Even if it's coaching an opposing team, Braves fans would love to see that happen as well.

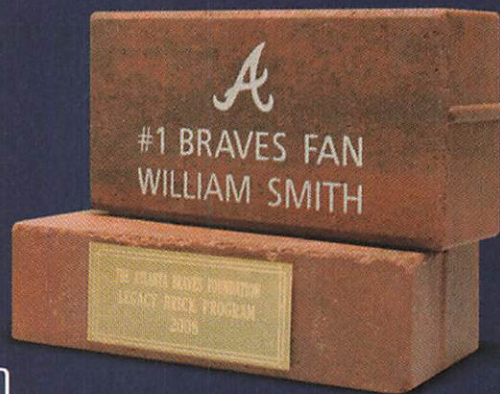
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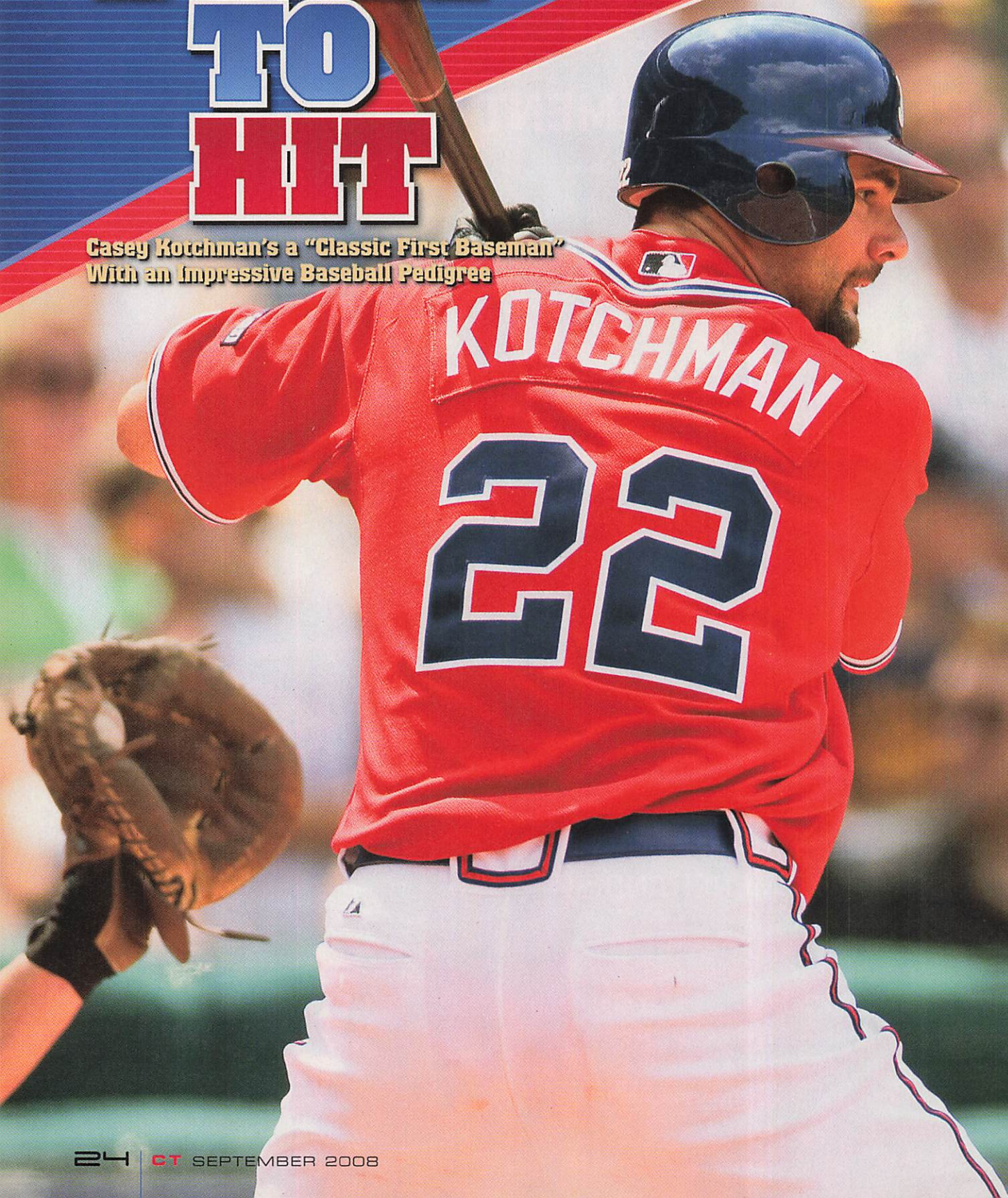
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BORN TO HIT

Casey Kotchman's a "Classic First Baseman"
With an Impressive Baseball Pedigree



CASEY KOTCHMAN isn't one to make a big splash. He just happens to be around them - a lot.

Kotchman, the centerpiece of the Braves' July 29 trade of Mark Teixeira to the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim, seemingly has always been around winners.

"I've just been fortunate to be on good teams," said the 25-year-old native of St. Petersburg, Fla., a former first-round pick (13th overall) of the Angels in the 2001 draft - coincidentally, selected eight picks after Texas chose Teixeira.

He was a member of the USA Junior National Team that won the 1998 World Championships, he was named Gatorade National High School Player of the Year after leading Seminole High to Florida's 5A state championship in 2001, and he played on division winners in three of the past four seasons with the Angels.

Regardless of which side of this chicken-and-the-egg debate you fall on - does he win because of his teams, or do his teams win because of him - one thing that can't be denied is that Kotchman knows how to win.

At the time of the trade, he led the team with the major league's best record in hits (107), was tied for the team lead in RBIs (54) and was third in homers (career-high 12) and average (.287).

"Casey's kind of your classic first baseman," said Frank Wren. "He's an outstanding defensive first baseman, he's young, and we think the best is still to come. This year, he had driven in 18 percent of the runners he had on base prior to the trade, while Teixeira had driven in 16 percent of the runners he had on base. So, he has the ability to drive in runs. They're different types of players, but, nonetheless, we think he's a very good player."

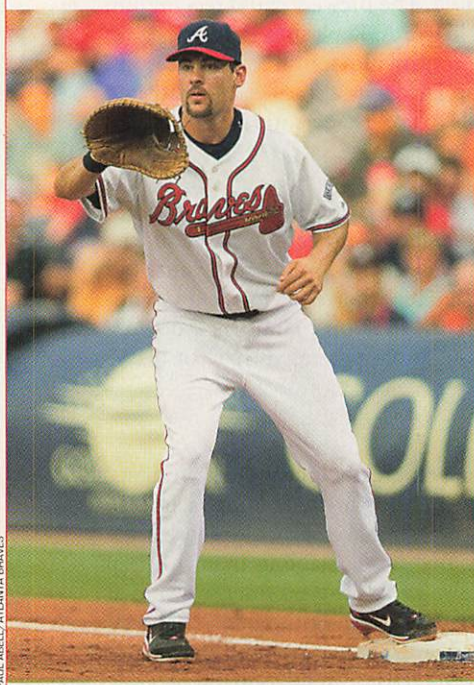
At 6-3, 215, Kotchman hits exclusively left-handed and makes good contact (at the time of the trade, he was the toughest hitter in the American League to strike out - once every 17.3 at-bats). He also dominates lefties, hitting .349 against them, sixth in the AL, and is superb with runners on base.

For his career, he is a .288 hitter with runners in scoring position, and with the bases loaded, he's batting .333 (9-for-27), with two grand slams and 24 RBIs. He's also hitting .316 with a runner at third and two outs and .452 with a runner at third and two outs late in the game. This year, he's batting .306 with two outs and .348 with two outs and runners in scoring position.

The Braves saw Kotchman's penchant

for heroics first-hand in their June series with the Angels in Anaheim. Although he finished the series 1-for-9, that one hit, in the fifth inning of the series finale, was a game-winning, two-run homer off Jorge Campillo. He lunged at an 0-1 changeup at his shoetops and yanked it into the first row of seats in right field for the only runs of the game in the Angels' 2-0 victory.

His heroics also extend to first base. The Angels' minor league defensive player of the year in 2004, Kotchman is a career .997 fielder (eight errors in 316 chances through games of August 4) and has committed only two errors in 2008, both on June 20 at Philadelphia, which snapped a 77-game



Kotchman is an excellent fielder who had a 77-game errorless streak broken June 20.

errorless streak.

That's earned him the approval of Chipper Jones.

"I love the defender that he is," said Jones. "He's a really good defensive first baseman, which is what we're used to in Atlanta."

His new teammates believe he'll be an equally good fit in the clubhouse.

"He's a good dude. We're happy to have him," said Brian McCann. "We're all making him feel welcome. [The Teixeira trade was] a business deal. It's just one of those things that we weren't in the playoff race, so we decided to get rid of Mark. We couldn't have gotten a better replacement."

"All we want is for him to be Casey. We

don't want him to have to try to be Tex," added Jeff Francoeur. "We played against him this year and saw how good he is. For us, it's just a matter of him being himself and don't try to do too much."

The welcome mat actually was rolled out before Kotchman met anyone in the Atlanta organization, courtesy of Fred McGriff, the Braves' most famous trade deadline acquisition (1993).

"I just told him that he'll be fine," said McGriff, who used to work out in the same facility as Kotchman, who was in high school at the time. "It was the first time he had been traded, so I called him to tell him that it's all good. Atlanta's a good city, good people, a good place to play, stuff like that. He was having a good year and the team was in first place. So I'm sure he was caught by surprise a little bit."

Braves fans should be pleasantly surprised by the skill, dedication to fundamentals, and intensity Kotchman brings to the park every night, as well as the fact that he won't be eligible for free agency until after the 2011 season.

"He was born to hit," said St. Louis Cardinals second baseman Adam Kennedy, a teammate of Kotchman's with the Angels from 2004 through 2006. "He grew up in a baseball family, and it shows. He plays the game the right way."

Kotchman was taught the right way to play by his father, Tom Kotchman, a minor league manager since 1979, the past 24 years in the Angels chain. He remembers that his son was always a student of the game.

"After he played his Little League season, he'd come out to where I was coaching - Boise, Idaho, or whatever," his father recalled. "Garret Anderson was there, and then after that, Eduardo Perez was there the next year, and Eduardo Perez was outstanding with him."

"I liked hanging around [his father], and he had to go to work, so I came with him," Casey said. "I loved coming around the field, watching the players go about their business on a day-to-day basis."

"I remember seeing Troy Percival, Garret Anderson, Jarrod Washburn, a lot of those guys," he continued. "Devon White, Mark McLemore. My dad's gotten a lot of hitting drills from Rod [Carew] and just pointers here and there. I got an extensive knowledge in hitting."

Kotchman quickly adapted to the pros,

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



AROUND

BASEBALL

BY KEN ROSENTHAL

WILL MANNY BE MANNY FOR LONG AS A DODGER?

THE DODGERS will be under tremendous pressure to keep **Manny Ramirez**, and some of their people already are talking about re-signing the team's other big trade acquisition, **Casey Blake**. The Dodgers parted with one young third baseman, **Andy LaRoche** (brother of former Braves first baseman **Adam LaRoche** and now his teammate in Pittsburgh), in the Ramirez trade. Another, **Blake DeWitt**, might not be a long-term answer. Blake, however, is about to turn 35, and might prefer a lower-profile market as a free agent.

The Brewers still could trade first baseman **Prince Fielder** this winter, but they are less likely to do it than they were at the start of the season. Shortstop **J.J. Hardy** remains a better bet to be moved. The Brewers could replace him with **Alcides Escobar**, their phenom at Triple A. Replacing Fielder's power would be more difficult, and the Brewers control him for three more seasons. Then again, GM **Doug Melvin** could shop Fielder as a cheaper alternative to free agent **Mark Teixeira** and get multiple major leaguers in return.

The Red Sox's plan in placing a waiver claim on **Brian Giles** was to use him some in right field, moving **J.D. Drew** to center against certain righthanders. The Padres would have helped pay some of Giles' \$3 million buyout, and only received a fringe prospect in return. Giles, however, invoked his no-trade clause to the Red Sox, partly for family reasons. He turned down a chance to get back to the post-season and also a pro-rated share of his \$2 million trade bonus – about \$600,000.

The emergence of catcher **Kelly Shoppach** greatly increases the Indians' options this off-season. One possibility would be to trade Shoppach for a top-of-the-rotation starter – a move that would make particular sense if the Tribe signed say, **Jason Giambi** to play first base, enabling them to keep **Victor Martinez** at catcher. The Indians also could fill their offensive void at another position – say, with second baseman **Orlando Hudson**. That way, they could stay with Shoppach, move Martinez to first, and keep **Matt LaPorta** – their big prize in the **CC Sabathia** trade – in the outfield.

Jim Edmonds turned around his season by getting wider and lower in his stance shortly after joining the Cubs. "My hands got quicker overnight," Edmonds said. "It was the difference between lunging forward and staying behind the ball. I didn't have to work on anything. I just widened my stance and boom! There it was." Edmonds couldn't hit that way last season. Coming off surgery on his left foot, he didn't have enough strength to put weight on his back foot.

No one expected Cardinals third baseman **Troy Glaus** to be **Scott Rolen**'s match defensively, but Glaus actually could end up winning his first Gold Glove. He has the fewest errors of any regular National League third baseman, and he also fares well in more advanced statistical measures. Glaus freely admits that his range at 32 isn't what it was when he was younger.

- KEN ROSENTHAL IS A SENIOR WRITER FOR FOXSPORTS.COM

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

going 5-for-5 in his fifth game for Provo, which was managed by his dad. He was batting .541 through his first 11 games before a wrist injury ended his season.

Adjusting to professional pitching proved easier than handling the injury bug.

A back injury cost him time in 2002, although he still hit .281 at Cedar Rapids (A), and a torn right hamstring limited his action in 2003 at Rancho Cucamonga (A), but not before he hit .350 with 12 doubles, eight homers, 42 runs and 28 RBIs in 57 games.

Ranked by Baseball America as the Angels' top prospect in 2002, 2004 and 2005, Kotchman started 2004 in Double-A Arkansas but made his major league debut May 9, after Darin Erstad went on the disabled list. He set a major league record in starting his career with 48 plate appearances before striking out for the first time.

Ironically, he made headlines on June 2 by becoming Pedro Martinez's 2,500th strike-out victim. But it didn't come easy: Pedro needed 15 pitches to get him, because Kotchman fouled off 11 consecutive pitches.

He finished hitting .224 in 38 games, but made his hits count as 10 of his 26 came with runners in scoring position.

The next season he played in 40 games, hitting seven homers and hitting a blazing .339 in September.

His strong finish, followed by a superb spring training (.421), earned him a promotion and an opening day start. But after a slow start (.152, one HR, six RBIs in 29 games), he was forced to shut down for the season in May due to a bout with mononucleosis.

Healthy in 2007, Kotchman played a career-high 137 games and set career bests for average (.296), home runs (11) and RBIs (68).

His dad believes the injuries gave him a renewed appreciation for the game.

"He understands that the game can be taken away from you at any point and that you need to play hard every day," said the senior Kotchman. "The thing that the players always liked with him is he's very intense on the field, and he's into every pitch."

"I just try to get the most out of each day," said Kotchman. "You try to pour everything into the present and let everything fall where it may."

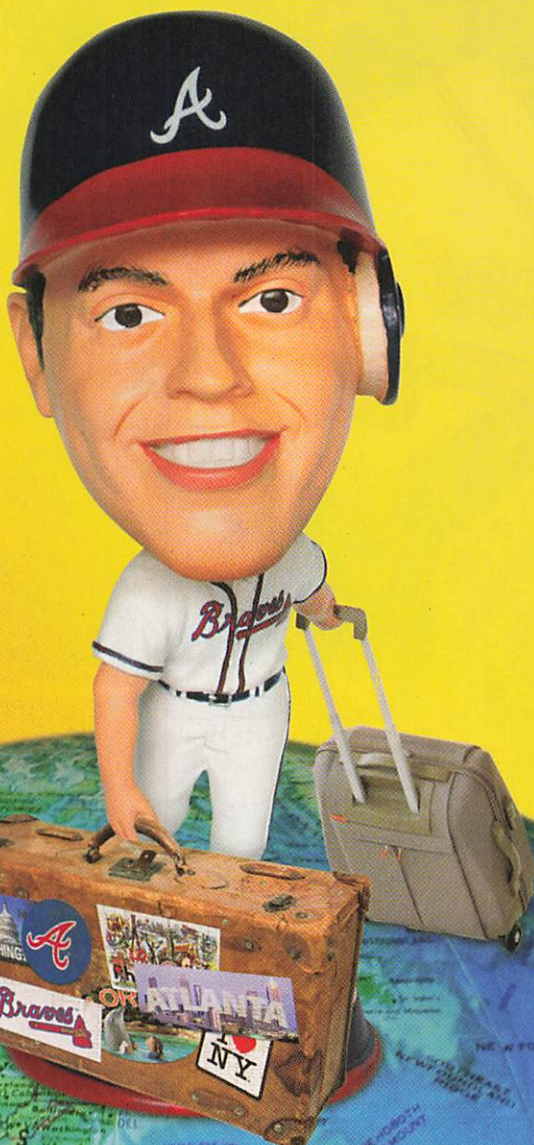
His father, who still manages in the Angels organization with the Orem (Utah) Owlz (advanced rookie Pioneer League), said he'll get used to splitting his loyalties.

"Let's put it this way: We've got a satellite dish in our locker room," he said. "The Angels game is on in the locker room, and the Braves game is on in my office."

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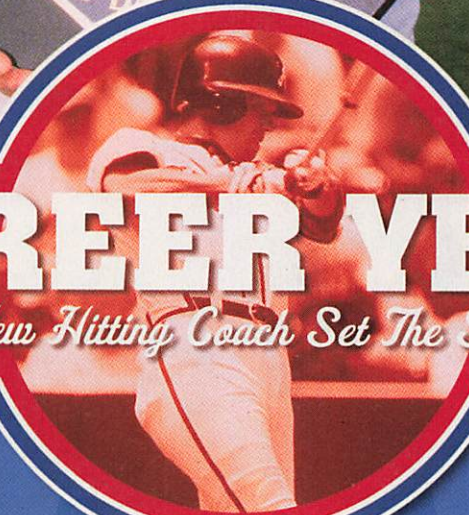
#10

THROUGH THE YEARS



CAREER YEAR

Personal Drama And a New Hitting Coach Set The Stage For an MVP Season



Celebrities walk a thin line between adoration and scorn when it comes to public opinion.

Years of accolades and positive public image can be lost in one misstep.

Chipper Jones, Atlanta's "golden boy" from his drafting in 1990, learned in 1998 how quickly public opinion can turn and how difficult the flip side can be.

The season itself was one in which the Braves sought redemption for playoff shortcomings in 1996 and '97. To that end, they cut ties with such beloved figures as Mark Lemke, Fred McGriff and Jeff Blauser, replacing them with Andres Galarraga, Keith Lockhart and Walt Weiss.

The results were a rousing success. The '98 edition was among the most dominant in Atlanta history. Led by Chipper and Andruw Jones, Galarraga, Javy Lopez and Ryan Klesko, the Braves set franchise records for wins (106), home runs (215), and RBIs (794). They also were superb defensively, fielding a then-Atlanta-best .985.

"That was a really good offensive team, probably one of the best that I've played on," Chipper recalled. "We had all the ingredients. We had speed, we had guys who knew their role, good situational hitters, and then we had some bombers. It seemed like everybody had an above-average year. We did some special things offensively. We just came up a little short in the post-season."

Jones set career-highs with a .313 batting average, 34 homers, 111 RBIs, 188 hits and 123 runs, passing Hall of Famer Eddie Mathews' season high for a Braves third baseman. In the field, he committed a then-career-low 12 errors.

His strong performance appeared to receive a lift after he made a phone call to his father, a longtime coach at Stetson University, for hitting advice while he was in a slump.

"My dad is my hitting coach. There's no secret about it," Chipper said. "He's the one who knows my swing better than anybody. I can call him at any time, and he knows what I'm doing wrong. He doesn't push the game on me. If I don't want to talk about it, we don't talk about it. He certainly offers great advice and knows what makes me tick and what's going to get me back on track."

"I personally think it's more moral support," offered his father, Larry Jones. "I don't think that it's anything more than that. Terry [Pendleton] and I have talked about it over the last few years. He says, 'You just use a little different language than I use,' and he's right. Sometimes it's just dad being around and things of that sort, and you kind of start to feel comfortable again."

Chipper was anything but comfortable during the post-season, getting only two hits and driving in but one run in the Division Series sweep of Chicago (although it was the game-winner in Game 2), then hitting his LCS career-low .208 (5-for-24), as the Braves fell in six games to San Diego.

About a week after the Braves were eliminated, Jones admitted marital infidelity and the fathering of a child out of wedlock.

"It was something that I'm not proud of, but I stood up and took it like a man and let people make their judgments," he said. "Ten years later, I've got a beautiful 10-year-old little boy. He is a flat-out stud. He hits from both sides of the plate, running back on his football team, straight-A student. So, with every black cloud, there is always a silver lining."

"Matthew was God's gift to our family out of that," added Larry. "That boy is a huge part of our family. Chipper has been more than just a name on a check to him. That was what was important to my wife and I. That little boy had no say-so as to how he came into the world and into what situation. He deserves all the rights and privileges to being both Chipper's son and getting all the rights and privileges of being my grandson."



Chipper, flanked by Gold Glove winners Greg Maddux and Andruw Jones, displays his 1999 MVP and Silver Slugger awards.

Chipper's candor and responsibility weren't received with the forgiveness he hoped.

Already facing the pressures of being in a contract year, Jones fought a bigger battle in 1999, to earn back his good name. He found a key ally in new Braves hitting coach Don Baylor. The same Don Baylor who saw his managerial dream season with Colorado shattered by Chipper in 1995 set Jones on course for his dream season in 1999 before a return to managing in 2000 (Cubs).

"[Baylor] didn't like my approach of hitting from the right side, my mentality," said Chipper. "He got me to swing more from the heels, think power first and average later, and on the whole, I had my career year behind him. Through the course of your career, you're going to have a coach that you just click with. For me, it was Don Baylor."

His very first batting practice session set the tone.

"Chipper was going through the divorce in the off-season, and he was living with us back in Florida," recalled Larry. "He got ready to start spring training and he drove down to Disney. When

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

THE METS KILLER

It took all of three days for Chipper Jones to become the scourge of Flushing, Queens.

The Mets came into Turner Field on Sept. 21, 1999, a game behind the Braves and optimistic about their chances of unseating the four-time NL East champs.

Jones, who hit .400 (16-for-40) with seven homers and 16 RBIs off Mets' pitching during the '99 season, had other plans.

In the opener, he homered in the first

inning off righthander Rick Reed, then, with the score tied, 1-1, homered in the eighth off reliever Dennis Cook. Braves win, 2-1.

The next day, in the first inning, he hit a two-run shot off Orel Hershiser. The Mets would tie the game, but the Braves scored one in the seventh and two in the eighth. Chipper was central to the eighth-inning rally, drawing a walk and scoring the second insurance run. Braves win, 5-2.

In the finale, with the Braves down, 2-1,

in the fifth inning, Jones connected for his fourth hit of the series - a three-run homer off Al Leiter. Braves win, 6-3.

Game, series, division title.

The Mets learned their lesson. When they met the Braves in that year's National League Championship Series, they found a way to stop Chipper. They walked him nine times and hit him with a pitch once in 29 plate appearances, and yet still lost the series.

- JON COOPER

he got back, he walked in the house and he said, 'Dad, the worm has turned in Atlanta.'

"He said, 'I hit left-handed and I hit pretty good (in BP). My left-handed pitcher didn't show up, so I started packing my stuff to leave, because I wasn't going to hit right-handed,'" Chipper's dad continued. "'Don walked over and he said, 'Get your high-priced rear-end back into that cage. You ain't done hitting yet. I'm gonna make you a right-handed hitter.' That year was the only year Chipper never called me about his hitting."

He never had to. With a bevy of leadoff men, including Gerald Williams, Otis Nixon and Ozzie Guillen, and Bret Boone hitting second, Chipper had superb table-setters, and Brian Jordan provided ample protection behind him most of the year.

"I enjoyed the pressure-cooker spot hitting behind him because with my success came his success," recalled Jordan, who set his career-high for RBIs and made his lone All-Star appearance in '99 while protecting Chipper. "We just had a lot of fun with it. But I enjoyed the pressure and I enjoyed watching [Chipper] be successful and win the MVP that year, and I felt I was a part of that."

Chipper's fight to regain his reputation was on, with the ballpark serving as sanctuary.

"It was the one place that I could go that I could kind of put everything at arm's length and really just concentrate on something else," he said. "I knew that if I continued to be a good role model - or better role model - and continued to do the things on the field that I'd always done, that eventually people would forget."

They didn't forget right away. Jones was greeted with boos just for stepping to the plate. Being booed on the road was expected, but hearing it at Turner Field was something else.

"You'd have to have skin of steel for it not to affect you," said his mother, Lynne Jones. "After you've gotten through the whys and the wherefores and the 'how-could-you's and all that, you go back to he's your son and you support him."

"It was devastating," added Larry. "I think that he not only did not know how to react to his wife and his family, he didn't know how to react to what the fans were giving him. I heard him say that there were times, especially when he was on the road, that he just didn't want to go out there and listen to it anymore."

Jones turned the boos to cheers, leading the Braves in just about every offensive category and helping the team to its eighth consecutive division title.

Atlanta led the division from April 25 until July 28. After temporarily relinquishing the lead to New York - they were never further than two games out of first - Atlanta went 40-16 (.714) from Aug. 1 on, taking the lead for good on Aug. 22, and winning the division by seven games.

Chipper became the first major leaguer to hit .300 (.319), score 100 runs (116), hit 40 doubles (41, matching his team record), drive in 100 runs (110), walk 100 times (126) and steal 20 bases (25). He also set the National League season record for home runs by a switch-hitter with 45.

The record-setter came against the Mets, capping a memorable three-game

sweep, Sept. 21-23 at Turner Field, when Chipper went four-for-nine, with all four hits being home runs and all of them putting the Braves ahead.

"He solidified himself that year as a Mets killer, that's for sure," remembered Tom Glavine. "But that's what big players do in big games. They become the difference. As much as the opposition is going to say, 'Hey, we don't want to let this guy beat us,' he's going to find a way to beat you. Great players do that."

Jones not only earned infamy in New York, but he believes he made an indelible impression on the baseball writers voting for National League Most Valuable Player.

"That was the series that put me over the top as far as MVP," said Chipper, who received 29 of 32 first-place votes (432 points overall), beating Houston first baseman Jeff Bagwell (276) and Arizona third baseman Matt Williams (269).

The Braves beat Bagwell and Houston in four in the LDS, then the Mets in six in the LCS, before falling in four in the World Series to the Yankees.

The World Series loss hurt, but for Chipper, the '99 season put him back in good standing within the game, and, more importantly, gave him the confidence to stand up and lead within the Braves' clubhouse as the team headed into a new era.

"I always yielded to the Glavines and the Smoltzes and the Madduxes, the Galarragas, because they were older and had the numbers and the reputation behind them," he said. "But it soon became clear that it was important for me, at least from a position-player standpoint, that I take more of a vocal role, take more of a role of taking kids under my wing and trying to give them all the experiences that I've gone through, both on the field and off the field, as much as possible."

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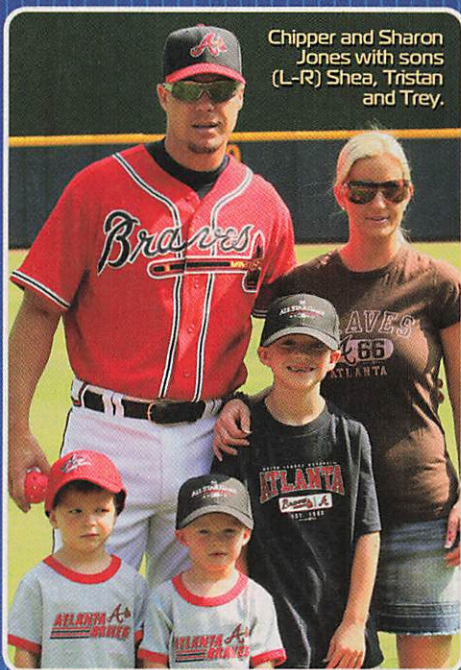
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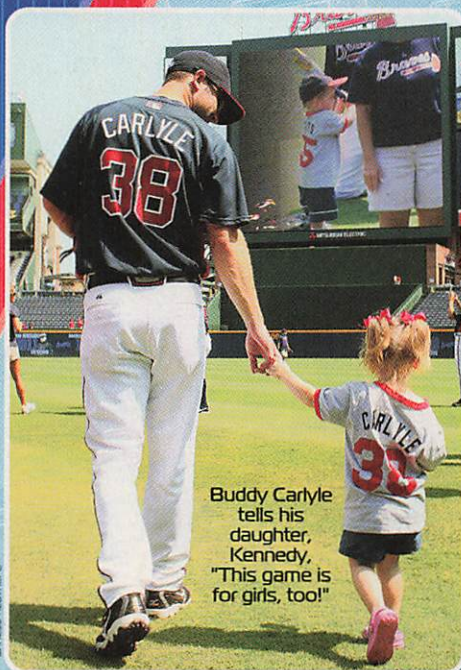
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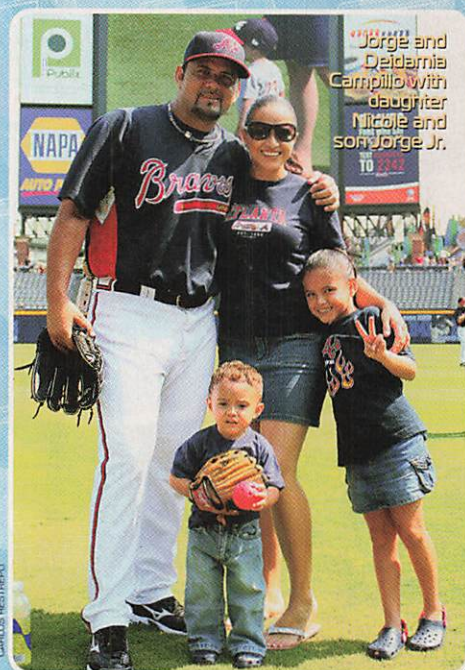
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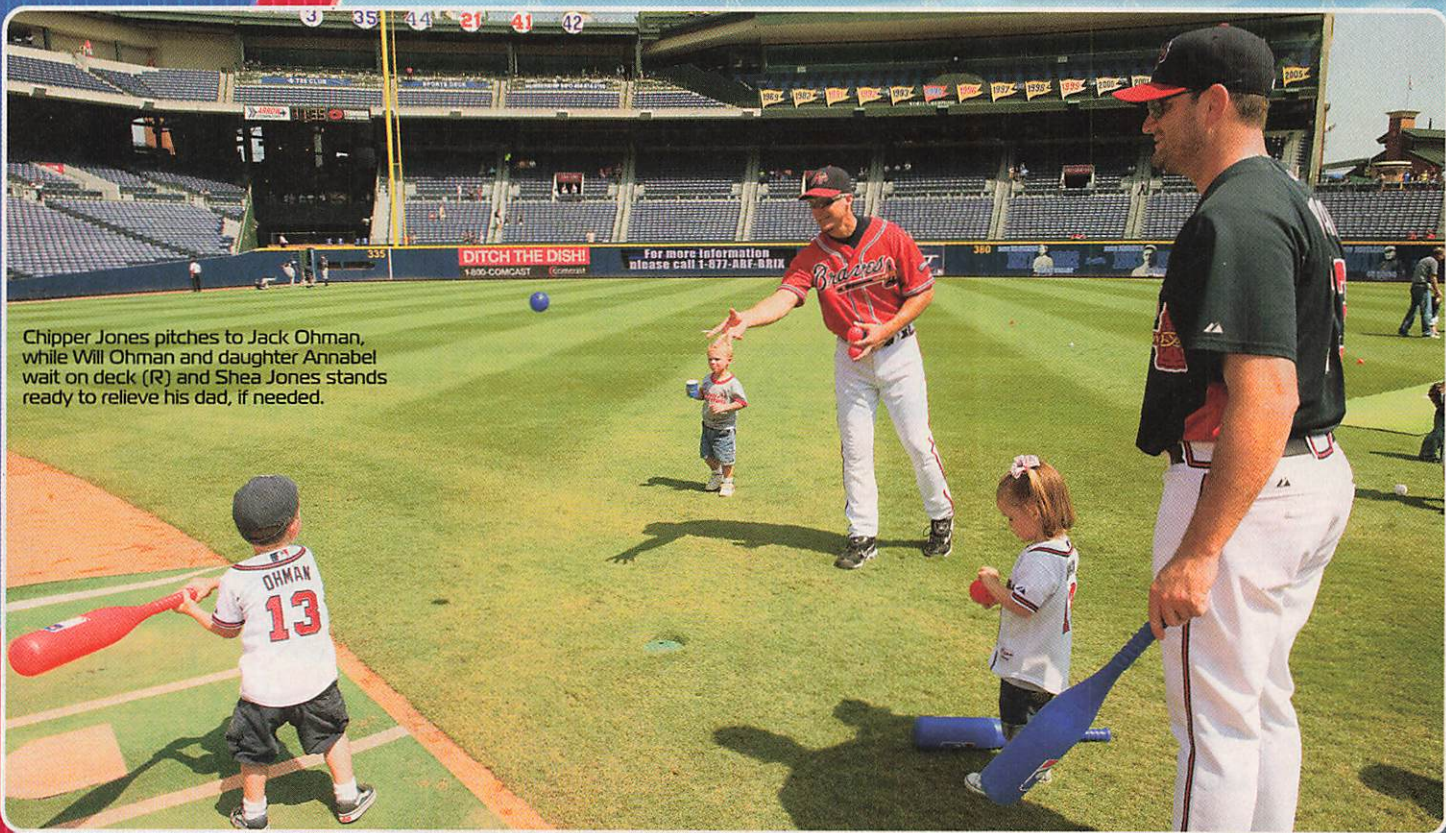
Chipper and Sharon Jones with sons (L-R) Shea, Tristan and Trey.



Buddy Carlyle tells his daughter, Kennedy, "This game is for girls, too!"

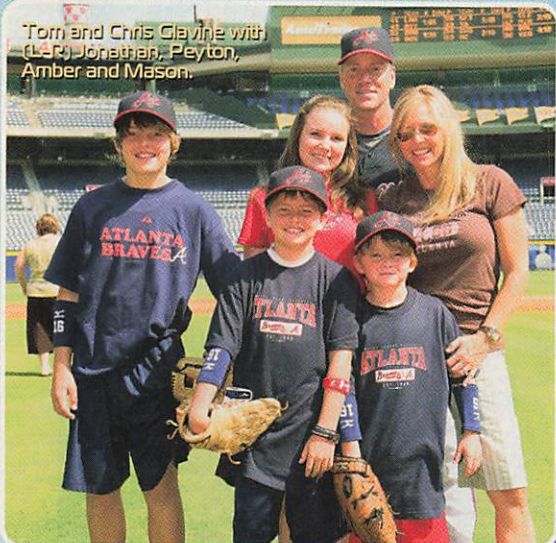


Jorge and Deidamia Campillo with daughter Nicole and son Jorge Jr.

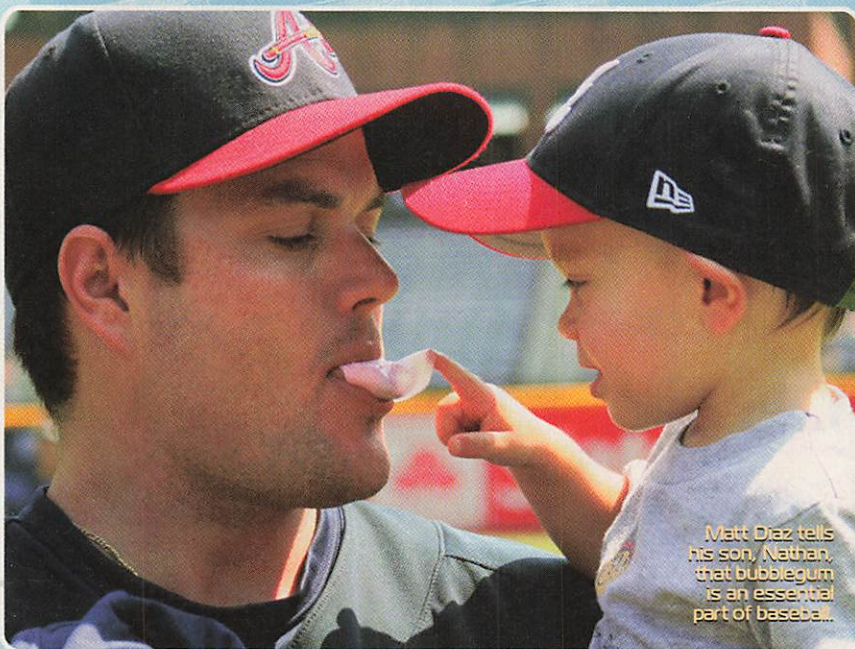


Chipper Jones pitches to Jack Ohman, while Will Ohman and daughter Annabel wait on deck (R) and Shea Jones stands ready to relieve his dad, if needed.

Tom and Chris Clayvine with
(L-R) Jonathan, Peyton,
Amber and Mason.

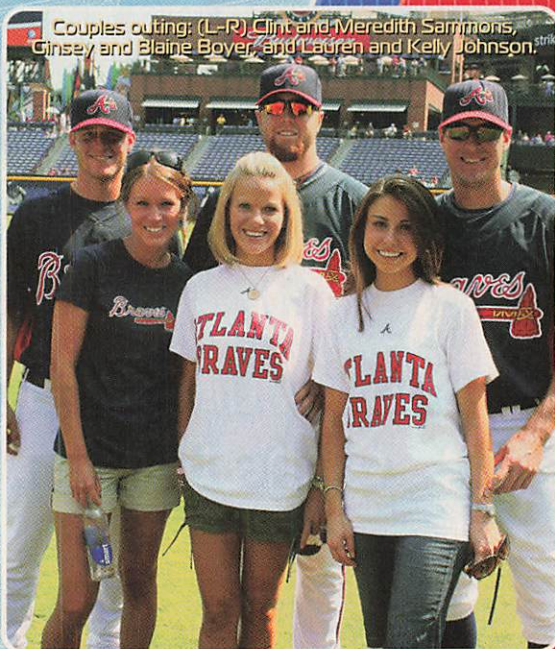


Tim and Kim Hudson with
(L-R) Kade, Tess and
Kennedie.

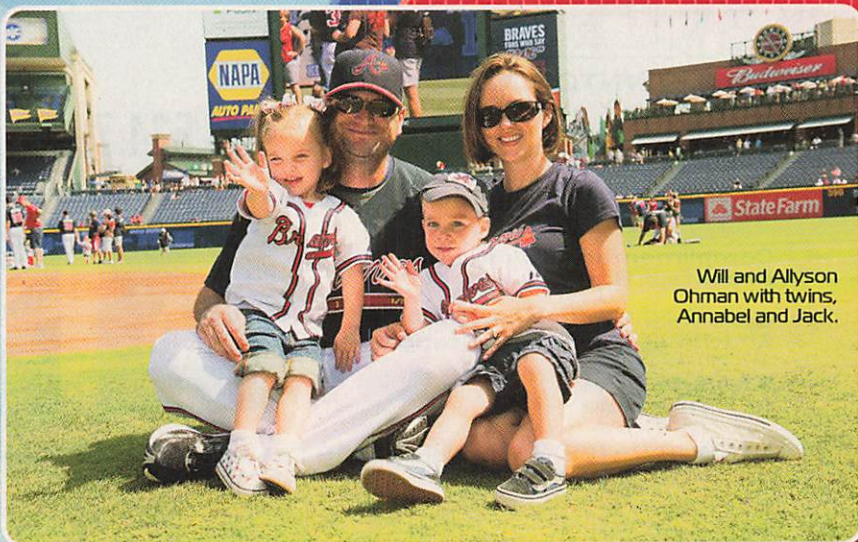
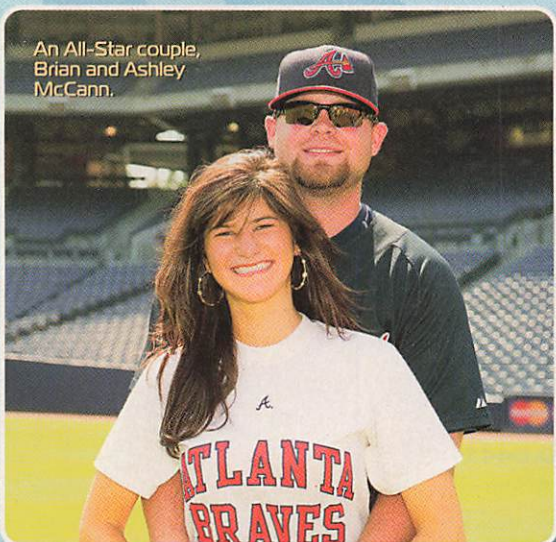


Matt Diaz tells
his son, Nathan,
that bubblegum
is an essential
part of baseball.

Couples outing: (L-R) Clint and Meredith Sammons,
Ginsey and Blaine Boyer, and Lauren and Kelly Johnson.



An All-Star couple,
Brian and Ashley
McCann.



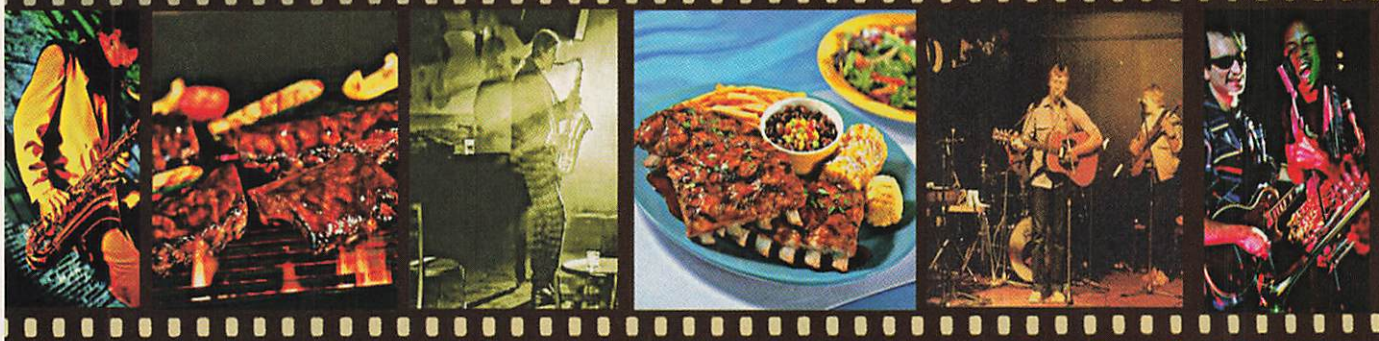
Will and Allyson
Ohman with twins,
Annabel and Jack.

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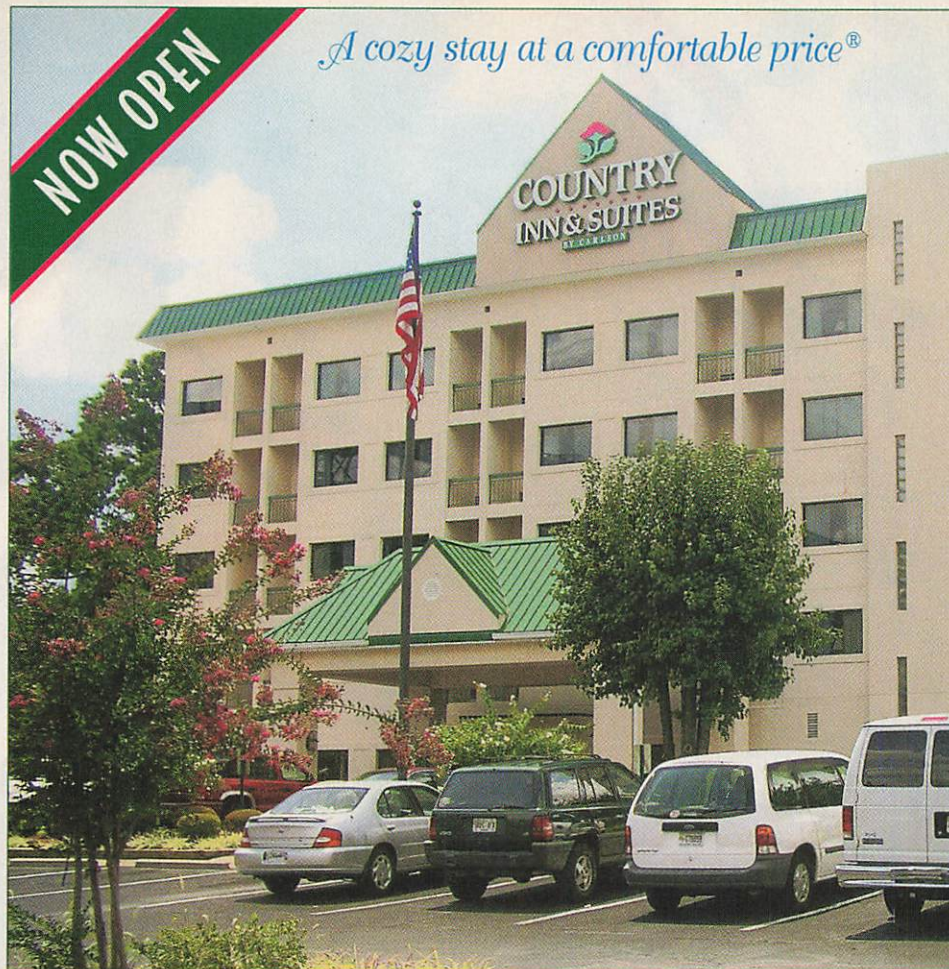
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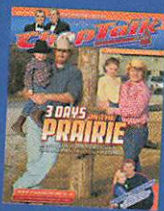
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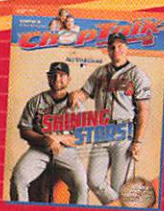
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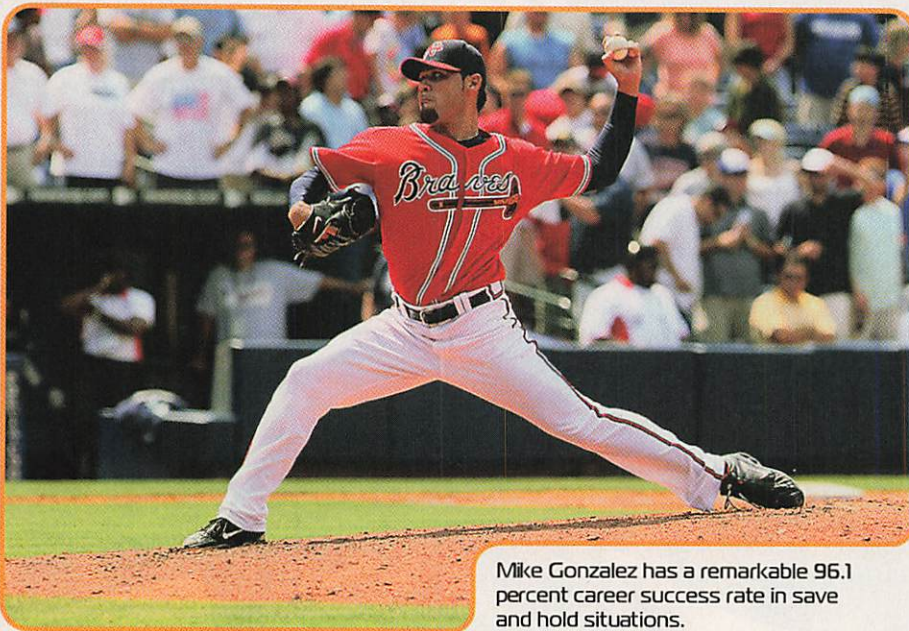
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BEHIND THE NUMBERS

GONZALEZ NEARLY PERFECT WITH A LEAD



PAUL ABELL/ATLANTA BRAVES

Mike Gonzalez has a remarkable 96.1 percent career success rate in save and hold situations.

BY STEVE FALL

ALTHOUGH INJURIES and other factors have limited Mike Gonzalez's save opportunities since joining the Braves, he's been incredibly reliable in the closer role.

Through Aug. 3, Gonzalez had converted 34 straight save opportunities. His last blown save came in June 2004.

Of course, the lefty closer missed significant time last year and early this season while recovering from Tommy John surgery. Since reaching the big leagues in 2003, Gonzalez had yet to blow a save in the closer role. His only three career blown saves came as a Pirates setup man in 2004. In two of those three games, he did not allow an earned run.

In those 34 consecutive saves – which equal his career total – Gonzalez owned a sparkling 1.08 ERA. His 2.34 overall career ERA ranked second among active major league pitchers with 200 or more appearances. Gonzalez trailed only Mariano Rivera (2.31). The 30-year-old lefty also placed eighth in hits allowed per nine innings (6.87), fifth in home runs surrendered per nine innings (0.52), and 13th in strikeouts per nine innings (10.26).

Gonzalez, acquired prior to last season from Pittsburgh with Brent Lillibridge for Adam LaRoche and Jamie Romak, excels when protecting late leads. He had 39 career holds to go with his 34 saves. So, he had preserved his team's advantage 73

times in 76 combined save and hold opportunities. That computes to a sensational 96.1 success rate.

Stringing together 10-win seasons may not sound that difficult, but few pitchers can do it. Since Tim Hudson's rookie season in 1999, he and Mike Mussina are the only two pitchers to reach double-digits in wins all 10 years. Former Brave Greg Maddux (5-8 through Aug. 3) still had a chance to join them.

Hudson not only started his career with 10 consecutive seasons of double-digit victories, but he posted a winning record each year. That makes him just the third pitcher ever to start his career with 10 successive 10-victory campaigns with a winning percentage over .500 every season. Hall of Famers Carl Hubbell (12, 1928-39) and Kid Nichols (10, 1890-99) are the only others.

After elbow problems ended his season, Hudson's career record stood at 146-77 (.655 winning percentage). Since 1950, just six other pitchers had at least 140 wins and a .650 winning percentage through their age-32 season (determined by age on June 30). Hudson joins Sandy Koufax, Whitey Ford, Juan Marichal, Roger Clemens, Pedro Martinez, and Andy Pettitte in that group.

Since June 8, 1999, when Hudson made his major league debut, he topped all pitchers with 146 wins. He also ranked third in innings (2,017.1) and fourth in starts (303). Among pitchers with at least 1,000 innings during this time frame, Hudson placed 10th in ERA (3.48). His .655 winning percentage ranked sixth for pitchers with 100 career decisions, trailing only Martinez (.709), Johan Santana (.667), Clemens (.663), Roy Halladay (.663) and Roy Oswalt (.659).

While Casey Kotchman has not yet posted big home run numbers, he contributes in a number of others ways. He delivers doubles, rarely strikes out, plays excellent first base, and hits well against left-handed pitching for a lefty batter (.299 career average versus southpaws).

Kotchman is one of the few major league hitters who provide extra-base power while making consistent contact. His 108 career extra-base hits exactly matched his strikeout figure (through Aug. 3). Among active players with at least 1,000 career plate appearances, only seven other hitters had as many or more extra-base hits as strikeouts: Albert Pujols, Nomar Garciaparra, Vladimir Guerrero, Paul Lo Duca, Placido Polanco, Dustin Pedroia and Todd Helton.

Kotchman should boost his power output some as a Brave. Angel Stadium of Anaheim is a tough home run park, especially for left-handed batters. Kotchman hit 11.3 homers per 500 at-bats in that ballpark, compared to 15.7 on the road.

Brian McCann has already reached 20 home runs for the second time in his career. With 28 doubles, he appeared a lock to hit 30 of those, as well. If he can maintain a .300 average, he will reach levels rarely achieved by catchers for a second season in the past three. Mike Piazza, Ivan Rodriguez and Victor Martinez are the only backstops to have 20 homers, 30 doubles and hit .300 in the same season twice in their careers.

Should McCann join those players, it becomes even more impressive given his age (24). In 2006, he became just the second catcher 24 or younger to do this, joining Joe Torre of the 1964 Milwaukee Braves. If he matches this feat in 2008, McCann will stand alone in major league history.

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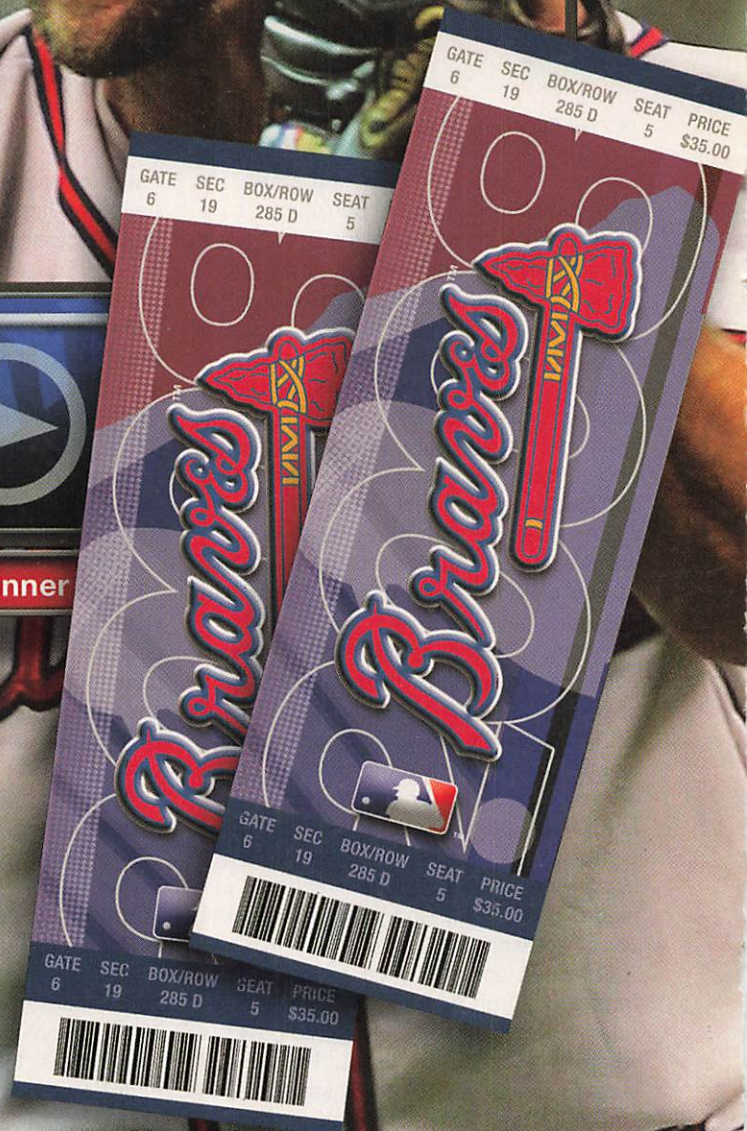
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Turner Field Tribute

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BY MARK BOWMAN OF MLB.COM

Throughout his 33 seasons as a Braves broadcaster, Skip Caray shared a friendship with thousands of people he never met. While simply delivering his honest voice into their living rooms on a nightly basis, he created a bond that exists beyond his death.

Many of the nearly 1,000 fans that gathered at Turner Field on the morning of Aug. 12 went to celebrate the life of that friend they never met. They mourned his sudden death on Aug. 3 and enjoyed some of the stories and calls he created during his legendary career.

"Skip was always there," said Pat Forney, a 57-year-old man from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., who was among those who knew Caray only as a reliable voice. "He was like a friend. His irreverence and honest approach to the game made it feel like you were watching the game with a friend sitting next to you."

At the start of the tribute, Caray's long-time broadcast partner, Joe Simpson, provided a reminder that the day would have been Caray's 69th birthday and prompted the crowd to begin singing "Happy Birthday."

"Today is a celebration," Simpson said. "We're going to be happy and have fun, just the way Skip would have wanted it."

As did the previous afternoon's public memorial service at Cathedral of Christ The King in Atlanta,

celebration throughout Braves Nation in honor of Caray. In addition, he read a message delivered by Commissioner Bud Selig, who said that Caray would be remembered throughout Major League Baseball that day.

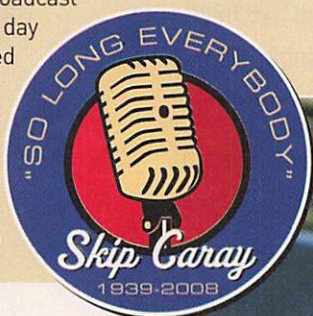
The public tribute came one day shy of the fourth anniversary of when Caray and his close friend and longtime broadcast partner Van Wieren were inducted into the Braves Hall of Fame together.

Van Wieren admitted that he faces a tough challenge in calling games with the knowledge that he'll never have the pleasure of working with Caray again.

But the television booth that he and Caray shared will provide a lasting memory. On the door, the Braves placed a sign that reads, "Skip Caray Broadcast Booth."

Simpson talked about the many times he'd look to his side and

To honor the memory of Skip Caray, the Braves named a broadcast booth after him and are wearing a "Skip" patch on their right jersey sleeve.



Skip Caray

BROADCAST BOOTH

the Turner Field service included memories from Pete Van Wieren and John Smoltz. Braves CEO and chairman Terry McGuirk delivered the opening speech, and Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue took time to honor the voice that he followed through many pennant races.

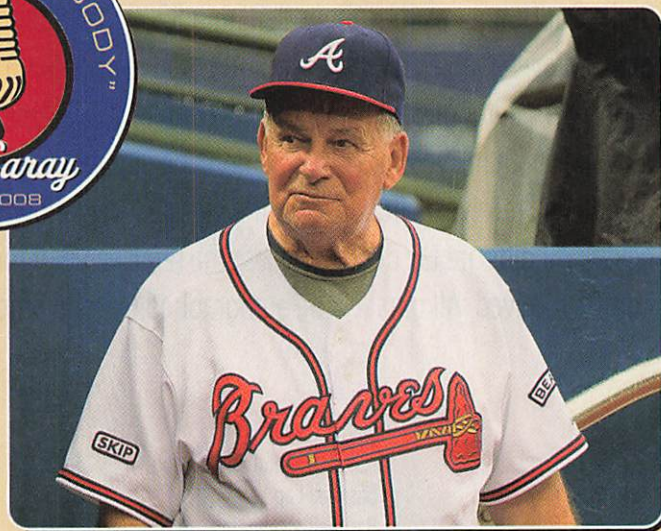
"I don't come as governor, but as one of the thousands of fans who came to love him," Perdue said.

Throughout the event, the stadium's large video board displayed past tributes to Caray, including one provided by his late father, Harry Caray, and also showed some of the best calls Skip's voice produced.

Many of those calls, including the one he made when Sid Bream slid home with the winning run in the 1992 National League Championship Series, included Caray proclaiming, "Listen to this crowd."

"You all were the base notes of the sounds of my father's life," Chip Caray said as he looked at Tuesday's crowd with Skip's other children - Josh, Shayelyn and Cindy - and Skip's wife, Paula, seated behind him.

During his address, McGuirk declared Tuesday to be a public



see Caray get a gleam in his eye. That was the sign that something sarcastic or witty was about to come out of his mouth.

"I always thought, 'Oh, no, where are we going with this?'" Simpson said. "But it was always fun."

Loyal fan Wayne Coleman, president of the Braves 400 Club, proudly provided a bagpipes rendition of "Amazing Grace" after a moment of silence was observed during the event.

"It was an honor for them to ask me to do that," said Coleman. "He was just a voice on radio or television... until 1990, when I met him and had some drinks with him."

In many ways, fans are still saying "thank you" to Caray for making them laugh and serving as the reliable friend they never actually got to meet.

"He was a private man who lived a public life," Chip said of the father who doubled as his best friend.

Strike Out Hunger!

SEND IN YOUR DONATION TODAY.

Atlanta Braves pitcher John Smoltz knows it's important to build a better community. That's why John is helping the Atlanta Community Food Bank strike out hunger. We need your help too! You can help Georgians in need by joining John's Strike Out Hunger team. John is donating \$200 to the Food Bank for every strikeout this season. And you can receive a sports item autographed by John for every pledge YOU make. As a special thank you for your donation and support, each paid pledge will receive a gift based on the pledge levels shown below. All gifts are tax deductible less the retail value of the item(s) received. All gifts will be autographed by John Smoltz.

Yes!

I will pledge \$ _____

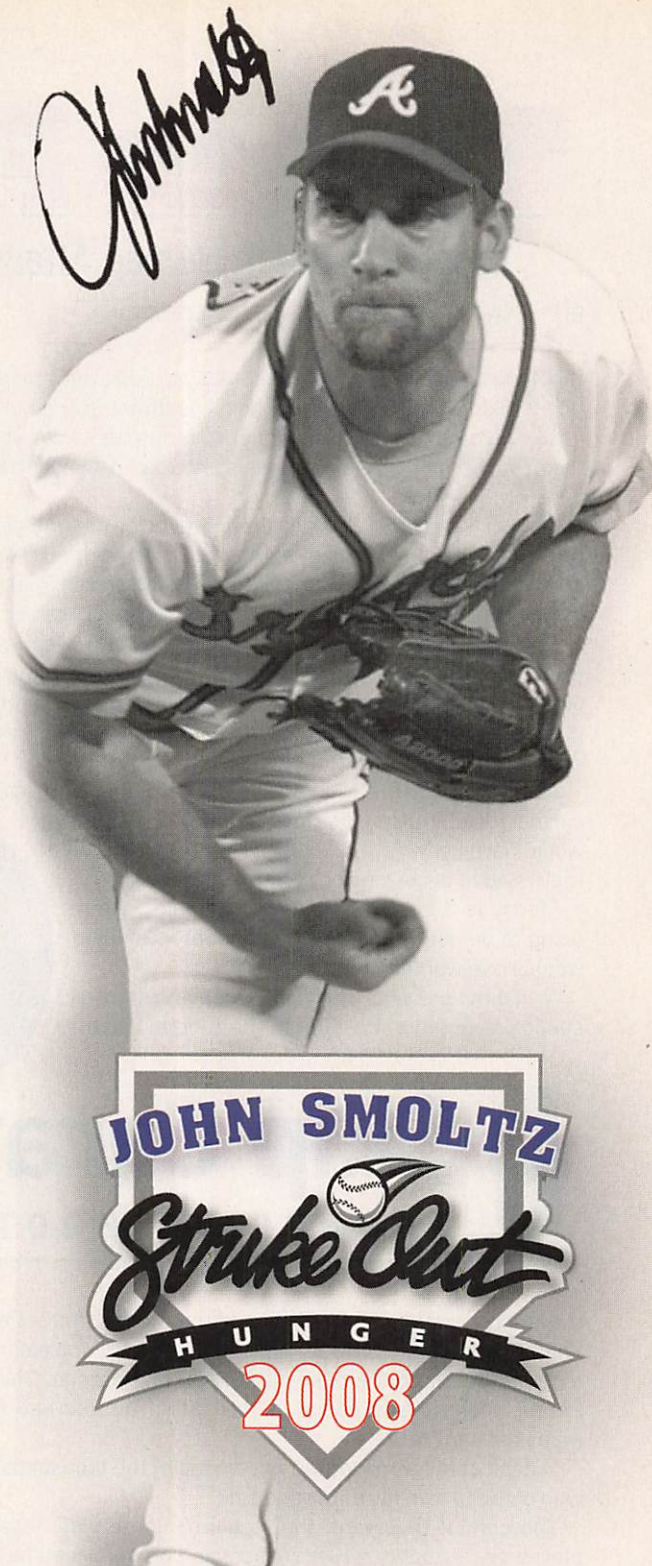
<u>Signed Gear</u>		<u>Total</u>
Limited Edition Photograph	\$ 25 _____	\$ _____
Baseball Cap	\$ 75 _____	\$ _____
Baseball	\$ 150 _____	\$ _____
Official Bat	\$ 400 _____	\$ _____
Official Glove	\$ 500 _____	\$ _____
Official Smoltz Braves Jersey	\$1000 _____	\$ _____
All items are	\$2150 _____	\$ _____

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____

The Strike Out Hunger season begins with the Braves opening home game and ends with the final regular season home game.
 All items based on availability and will be sent to you at the close of the Braves season and upon receipt of payment.

For more information call 404-892-FEED ext. 1246. Or visit ACFB.org

Pledge forms should be mailed to Atlanta Community Food Bank, 732 Joseph E. Lowery Blvd. NW, Atlanta, GA 30318-6628
 Please make checks payable to Atlanta Community Food Bank.



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 COMMUNITY
 FOOD
 BANK** 
 Nourishing stronger communities.



SIXTEEN STRIKEOUTS (COUNT 'EM) IN SIX INNINGS FOR DAVID FRANCIS

DANVILLE'S DAVID FRANCIS had one of the most dominating performances in the history of the Appalachian League (advanced rookie) in only the third start of his professional career. Facing the first-place Pulaski Mariners on July 22, the righthander accumulated 16 strikeouts in just six innings and held the visitors hitless in a 1-0 win.

"It was pretty awesome, particularly right after it happened," Francis said. "Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought I'd do something like that in my third start."

Drafted by the Braves in the 12th round out of Walters State Community College in Tennessee in June, Francis struck out the side in the first, third, fourth and sixth innings. He actually recorded four strikeouts in the fourth inning because Pulaski's Juan Fuentes reached first base by swinging and missing at a third-strike wild pitch. Francis also walked two and hit one before leaving because he'd thrown 84 pitches, one below his maximum.

A native of Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, Francis posted a 13-1 record with two saves during his two years at Walters State. The Braves liked his overall feel for pitching when they

drafted him, noting his low-90s fastball with a good and improving curveball and changeup. Francis said his fastball had more movement than usual in the 16-strikeout game, and he tried to move it off the edges of both sides of the plate until he got his curve and changeup working around the fourth inning.

"I didn't notice how many strikeouts I had until I got the four in the fourth inning," Francis said. "I knew I had 12 then, and I admit I started counting after that."

After Francis left the game, Matthew Small took the mound for the D-Braves and retired Juan Rivero on a groundout to second base before it began to rain. Play never resumed, and Francis earned his third win in an abbreviated no-hitter.

He has continued to pitch well since his gem, including a one-run, six-hit effort with eight strikeouts over seven innings on Aug. 7 to improve to 4-2 with a 2.09 ERA. In his first five starts, he allowed three earned runs, 17 hits and

six walks while striking out 39 in 30 innings.

"Right now, I'm just going out there hoping I can do it again," Francis said.



Francis struck out the side in four of the six innings he worked and even had four strikeouts in the fourth when a runner reached on a third-strike wild pitch.



ORGANIZATIONAL

THE BRAVES wrapped up the biggest task of lingering work from the June draft by signing University of Virginia righthander **Jacob Thompson** to a reported \$195,000 bonus in early August. By locking up the fifth-round pick, Atlanta had come to terms with 15 of its first 16 selections, the lone exception being 10th-rounder **J.J. Hoover**, a right-handed pitcher from Calhoun (Ala.) Community College who has committed to attend the University of West Virginia.

Thompson holds the promise of becoming one of the steals of the 2008 draft. He entered his junior year with the Cavaliers projected to be a first-round pick. He was coming off a sophomore season in which he earned consensus first-team All-America honors with an 11-0 record and a 1.50 ERA

before pitching for the U.S. National team in the Pan American Games. His performance fell this past spring when he was 6-4 with a 4.30 ERA in 15 starts.

"I've learned a ton, and I'm sure I'll learn a ton more during Instructional League," said Thompson, who reported to rookie-level Danville but was expected to see only limited activity before the end of the regular season. "I feel I need to get bigger and stronger, and hopefully I'll be ready to go for spring training."



RICHMOND TRIPLE A

THE ABUNDANCE of injuries in Atlanta led to multiple promotions to the big leagues for a dozen R-Braves, decimating Richmond's hopes for a run at the South

Division crown in the International League. The R-Braves went 6-21 in July and continued to struggle to find any consistency in early August. With no member of the Richmond rotation averaging five innings per start, the bullpen has become weary, leading to a team ERA of 4.58 through Aug. 9, last in the league...

Josh Anderson made a minor adjustment at the plate and went on a 16-game hitting streak from July 24-Aug. 9, during which the centerfielder was 32-for-71 to raise his batting average from .284 to .312. He had 12 multiple-hit games during the 16-game stretch. Anderson ranks among the International League leaders in hits and batting average and paced the R-Braves with 35 steals in his first 105 games...

Anderson is expected to return to Atlanta in the near future along with shortstop

NAME THAT RODENT



WHAT NAME do you give a groundhog? That's what the Gwinnett Braves are trying to decide, with the help of fans.

Through Aug. 27, suggestions were being accepted at gwinnettdailypost.com (link through gwinnettbraves.com) in a contest to win a trip for two to the 2009 Triple-A All-Star Game in Portland, Oregon. Three finalists will be announced Sept. 1, and an online poll will be held through Sept. 5 to

determine the winner, which will be announced later in September.

The mascot was chosen due to the popularity of General Beauregard Lee, a groundhog at Yellow River Game Ranch in Lilburn that helps "predict the weather" each Groundhog Day.

The Braves' Triple-A International League affiliate will move from Richmond to a new stadium in Gwinnett next season.

Brent Lillibridge. A promotion to Atlanta seemed to jump-start Lillibridge, who hit at a .382 clip in July and put together a 12-game hitting streak that ended on Aug. 3...

The R-Braves lost their leading home run hitter and RBI producer when first baseman **Scott Thorman** departed for the Olympics during the last week of July in order to play for Canada in the Summer Games in Beijing. Thorman was not expected to return to Richmond until the final week of August...

Leftfielder **Brandon Jones** had an eight-game hitting streak from Aug. 1-8, during which he went 12-for-34, drove in 10 runs, and hit a pair of home runs at Norfolk on Aug. 2. Jones' power numbers are down considerably this year after he drove in 100 runs last season...

Catcher **Corky Miller** and reliever **Royce Ring** cleared waivers and reported to Richmond after being designated for assignment by Atlanta... **Anthony Lerew** joined Richmond on July 17 as he continues to recover from elbow surgery.



MISSISSIPPI

DOUBLE A

AFTER BEING as many as 14 games under .500 earlier this season, the M-Braves continued to post one of the more remarkable turnarounds in the minors by taking over first place in the Southern League's second-half South Division standings. Mississippi won 11 of 12, including eight straight, from July 20-Aug. 1...

Some soreness in his shoulder caused **Tommy Hanson** to miss a start and visit the doctor during early August. The righthander received a clean bill of health, and proceeded to post 10 strikeouts on Aug. 4 for the second straight game, marking his fourth outing this season with double digits in strikeouts. Hanson was 7-3 with a 3.66 ERA in his first 14 starts with the M-Braves and 10-4, 2.71 in 21 starts overall this season. More impressively, he allowed only 74 hits in his

first 116 1/3 innings while striking out 132...

Deunte Heath retired the first 21 batters he faced and wound up allowing only one hit over eight innings to defeat Chattanooga, 7-0, on July 31...

Kris Medlen's move from reliever to starter continues to be one of the better stories this season in the Atlanta farm system. Medlen had a 2.99 ERA through his first 13 starts and moved into the top 10 in ERA among SL pitchers...

Todd Redmond, who was acquired from Pittsburgh for **Tyler Yates** during spring training, led the Southern League in innings pitched in early August when the Braves decided to give his arm and shoulder a rest by having him skip a start. Redmond won his 10th game of the season with seven shutout innings on July 28. His 10 wins represent the highest total in



PROSPECTS BY POSITION

- C** **Tyler Flowers**, 22, Myrtle Beach
- 1B** **Freddie Freeman**, 18, Rome.
- 2B** **Travis Jones**, 22, Myrtle Beach.
- 3B** **Eric Campbell**, 23, Myrtle Beach.
- SS** **Brandon Hicks**, 22, Mississippi.
- LF** **Brandon Jones**, 24, Richmond.
- CF** **Gorkys Hernandez**, 20, Myrtle Beach.
- RF** **Jason Heyward**, 19, Rome.
- RHP** **Tommy Hanson**, 22, Mississippi.
- LHP** **Cole Rohrbough**, 21, Myrtle Beach.
- CL** **Nick Fellman**, 23, Myrtle Beach.

Mississippi Braves history...

Luis Valdez set the M-Braves' record for saves in a season. The previous mark was 21, posted by Zach Schreiber in 2006, but Valdez broke the team record by recording three saves during the first week of August, giving him a total of 24...

The M-Braves received righthander **Steve Marek**, who was acquired with first baseman **Casey Kotchman** from the Los Angeles Angels for **Mark Teixeira** in July. Marek, whose fastball has been clocked as high as the mid-90s, owned a 2.84 ERA through five relief outings with Mississippi...

First baseman **Kala Ka'aihue** hit only two of his first 13 home runs this season at Trustmark Park. Conversely, he was hitting .244 on the road versus .284 at home. The Hawaiian ranked among the SL leaders with a .406 on-base percentage by virtue of drawing 73 walks in his first 326 at-bats...

Centerfielder **Jordan Schafer** has been inconsistent. He hit just .228 in July, including an 0-for-22 slide from July 10-23, and was dropped to seventh and ninth in the batting order for several games by manager **Phillip Wellman**.



MYRTLE BEACH

ADVANCED A

THE PELICANS may have won the first-half in the South Division of the Carolina League to ensure a playoff spot, but that doesn't mean the team has let up. Myrtle Beach reeled off 11 straight wins from July 30-Aug. 8 to open a comfortable lead in first place heading into the final few weeks of the season...

Catcher **Tyler Flowers'** bat continues to burn up the Carolina League. In the first seven games of August, Flowers had 14 hits in 24 at-bats with six walks, three home runs and 11 RBIs...

Third baseman **Eric Campbell** is also swinging a potent bat, particularly since the all-star break. Campbell has demonstrated

his power with nine doubles, 11 home runs and 31 RBIs in his first 150 at-bats since the break...

Second baseman **Travis Jones** had an impressive July by hitting .310 with six homers and 22 RBIs in 87 at-bats. The University of South Carolina product is showing the same type of offensive potential at second as **Marcus Giles** did in the Atlanta farm system...

After leading the Appalachian League with 16 saves last year, **Nick Fellman** has settled in as the Pelicans' closer during the second half. Fellman was 2-3 with one save and a 5.17 ERA in the first half, compared to a 2-0 mark with five saves and a 1.69 ERA in his first 14 outings of the second half...

First baseman **Ernesto Mejia** has erased **Marcus Giles'** name atop the Pelicans' franchise list for most doubles in a season. Mejia had 43 through Aug. 9, three better than the mark Giles established in 1999...

Scott Diamond improved to 11-1 with the Pelicans by winning his eighth straight decision on Aug. 7.



ROME

CLASS A

AFTER GOING 22-47 in the first half of the season, Rome had already won more games in the second half through Aug. 9 with a 26-23 record, including eight wins in its first nine games in August...

Lefthander **Cole Rohrbough** was promoted to Myrtle Beach after a three-start stretch when he allowed six runs and 12 hits in 19 2/3 innings with 27 strikeouts, and took a no-hitter into the eighth inning with two outs on Aug. 5 to pick up his third win of the season. Rohrbough missed all of April and half of May with rotator cuff tendinitis and the last two weeks of June with a sprained left ankle...

Cody Johnson had a season-high six RBIs versus Charleston on Aug. 7, part of a torrid second half that has seen the left-fielder bat at a .311 clip versus .210 in the first half. He continues to employ an all-or-nothing swing that has led to 20 home runs and 161 strikeouts in his first 405 at-bats...

First baseman **Freddie Freeman** looked to be hitting the wall in June before rebounding with an impressive July, when he batted .392 with six home runs and 23 RBIs...

The Braves are encouraged with the return of **Erik Cordier** to the mound. Acquired from Kansas City in 2007 in exchange for shortstop **T.J. Pena**, Cordier missed all of last season after undergoing

CONTINUED ON PAGE 47

DOWN ON THE FARM



MATT YOUNG

I NEED TO PUT A CHERRY ON TOP OF THIS STREAK

IN LATE JULY, it was one of those things where everything slowed down. On every pitch, it was like they told me what was coming. I've never been more locked in than I was those three days.

I worked on one small thing leading up to the streak. I talked to (manager) Phil (Wellman) and Stubby (hitting coach Franklin Stubbs) about finishing my swing a little bit higher. Once we did that, I had 11 straight hits. It was like a light switch came on, and the game slowed down.

In the first game of the Chattanooga series, on July 27, I went 4-for-4. My last time up, I had a base hit to right (before grounding out in the eighth). They announced the streak over the P.A. system, and I said to myself, "Oh, man, there's an 0-fer waiting to happen." At that point, I wanted to stay under the radar, but I knew what was going on.

When I got to nine earlier in that game, I thought that if I got to 15 straight times on base, either with a hit, a walk or getting hit by a pitch, it would be something to remember. I had no idea what the record was, or if they even kept track of that type of thing. But after that game, when I returned to the clubhouse, my phone rang constantly with friends and family back home congratulating me.

I feel like I've had a good year and that I've shown that when you put me in there, I can do the job. I had a great month of May, and I followed it up with a terrible June. I'm just trying to stay consistent. I know that's what this game is about.

If I can just finish strong, which is what I'm trying to do, then I'll be pleased. Everybody remembers how you finish, not what you did in April and May. If I can put a cherry on top of this thing, I'll look back in a month or so and say it was a successful year. But if I limp to the finish line, I'm not going to be happy with it.

I am very pleased with the way our team has responded this season. I think it's a great story. There hasn't been that much movement among the everyday players, other than a few guys making pit stops to fill in at Richmond or Atlanta. We were 14 games under .500 earlier this season, and to be where we are now (first place) is a testament to how the guys here have been busting their butts all year long.

We just have to keep our noses to the grindstone. The guys here are taking a lot of pride in what we've accomplished, because it's not like somebody came in and changed everything around.

For the first two months, we took our lumps, but we were all pulling from the same side of the rope and we were learning.

While the everyday players were doing that, we received an extra push from a couple of pitchers, including Tommy Hanson and Deunte Heath. Recently, the pitchers know the offense is going to put up some numbers, and the hitters know they only need to score a couple of runs based on how dominant our guys are throwing.

From an individual standpoint, I know getting 11 straight hits is just something unusual that happens from time to time in this game. What I try to do on a daily basis is to just keep being who I am. Any time I try to get outside myself, that's when I get into trouble.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Mississippi outfielder Matt Young, 25, broke a Southern League record that stood for 32 years when he collected his 11th straight hit on July 27. Young had a hit in his final at-bat on July 24 before going 4-for-4 on the 25th, 2-for-2 on the 26th, and 4-for-5 on July 27. He also reached base in 16 straight plate appearances. He was signed as a non-drafted free agent out of the University of New Mexico in 2004.

"I KNOW GETTING 11 STRAIGHT HITS IS JUST SOMETHING UNUSUAL THAT HAPPENS FROM TIME TO TIME IN THIS GAME."

FARM STATISTICS


RICHMOND
50-72

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE TRIPLE A | THE DIAMOND (804) 359-4444

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Anderson, Josh (OF)	.310	106	429	65	133	21	3	3	31	27	49	35
Arnold, Derrick (INF)	.248	48	149	9	37	7	0	1	10	5	35	5
Borchard, Joe (OF)	.274	33	117	16	32	5	2	4	12	13	29	3
Canizares, Barbaro (1B)	.292	115	428	46	125	23	0	12	55	33	61	1
Cruz, Enrique (INF)	.205	60	190	10	39	11	0	3	18	11	49	0
Hernandez, Diory (INF)	.299	101	385	40	115	20	2	5	44	16	62	4
Holt, J.C. (2B)	.215	26	79	11	17	1	0	0	7	14	21	7
Jones, Brandon (OF)	.259	87	317	40	82	22	1	5	45	39	73	8
Jurich, Mark (OF)	.229	30	109	13	25	9	0	1	9	5	24	0
Lillibridge, Brent (SS)	.218	72	285	34	62	13	3	3	21	24	71	18
Loadenthal, Carl (OF)	.273	52	161	15	44	3	0	0	10	15	39	5
Perry, Jason (OF)	.267	48	161	24	43	7	0	7	19	21	45	2
Phillips, Jason (C)	.209	20	67	6	14	3	0	3	10	4	7	0
Sammons, Clint (C)	.237	81	278	23	66	18	0	1	22	21	60	7
Taylor, Reggie (OF)	.248	53	153	17	38	5	3	2	11	11	28	3
Thorman, Scott (1B/3B)	.249	95	361	42	90	21	2	18	54	18	83	5
Timmons, Wes (INF)	.249	68	205	31	51	16	0	0	20	36	21	9

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Basner, Ryan	2-2	8.02	25	1	0	46.0	61	41	41	21	33	.323
Bueno, Francisley	2-5	5.02	17	12	0	75.1	84	44	42	28	51	.284
DeSalvo, Matt	2-11	4.60	31	7	0	86.0	89	52	44	52	90	.273
James, Chuck	4-5	2.48	14	13	0	76.1	64	27	21	34	67	.229
Julio, Jorge	1-2	2.73	29	0	7	29.2	28	15	9	18	29	.257
Lawrence, Brian	3-5	5.62	12	12	0	65.2	86	43	41	16	38	.320
Lerew, Anthony	0-2	6.46	5	5	0	15.1	23	12	11	10	9	.377
Morton, Charlie	5-2	2.05	13	12	0	79.0	51	20	18	27	72	.181
Moss, Damian	4-9	4.50	33	15	0	84.0	98	56	42	56	73	.298
Nelson, Brad	2-3	8.25	12	4	0	24.0	38	25	22	7	15	.358
Parr, James	1-3	4.78	6	6	0	32.0	36	17	17	8	26	.279
Reyes, Jo-Jo	1-1	2.12	7	7	0	34.0	26	9	8	12	33	.213
Ridgway, Jeff	3-0	6.15	39	0	4	45.1	63	37	31	20	50	.330
Rouwenhorst, Jonathon	8-9	5.31	35	14	1	103.1	132	71	61	42	68	.328
Schreiber, Zach	2-2	2.97	34	0	6	39.1	29	13	13	26	29	.209
Shibilo, Andy	1-1	6.37	32	0	1	41.0	53	30	29	29	39	.315
Williamson, Scott	2-1	6.61	15	1	0	16.1	18	12	12	5	20	.277


MISSISSIPPI
61-59

SOUTHERN LEAGUE AA | TRUSTMARK PARK (601) 864-7600

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Bennett, Paul (INF)	.182	48	132	13	24	4	1	0	10	10	39	1
Boscan, J.C. (C)	.217	68	221	20	48	9	0	1	22	28	45	0
Camarena, Jose (C)	.225	54	187	16	42	8	0	2	19	11	45	1
Creek, Greg (1B/3B)	.264	102	314	44	83	19	6	6	46	34	66	0
Davis, Quentin (OF)	.176	78	170	13	30	5	0	4	17	7	42	8
Gorecki, Reid (OF)	.298	57	215	46	64	7	0	10	40	31	40	16
Guzman, Javier (SS)	.246	94	334	44	82	14	4	2	27	18	39	8
Hernandez, Diory (INF)	.286	22	77	8	22	3	1	2	8	6	8	1
Hicks, Brandon (SS)	.333	11	36	9	12	3	1	1	7	7	12	0
Holt, J.C. (2B)	.292	78	322	47	94	15	7	3	40	35	55	19
Jurich, Mark (OF)	.219	46	137	14	30	8	1	3	18	15	39	0
Ka'aihue, Kala (1B)	.262	109	328	57	86	20	1	13	54	75	105	0
Loadenthal, Carl (OF)	.227	26	97	8	22	3	0	1	2	6	20	4
Perry, Jason (OF)	.314	38	137	34	43	11	2	13	41	23	44	1
Pope, Van (3B)	.265	82	302	37	80	17	1	4	44	25	43	7
Schafer, Jordan (OF)	.249	65	237	32	59	14	3	5	37	40	73	9
Young, Matt (OF)	.285	117	428	62	122	13	9	2	44	58	56	24

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Basner, Ryan	2-0	5.56	14	0	0	22.2	26	18	14	10	14	.289
Bush, Paul	0-1	2.70	7	0	0	10.0	6	3	3	1	14	.167
Gamble, Jerome	3-5	4.00	22	7	0	63.0	54	30	28	23	48	.231
Gunderson, Kevin	2-2	4.86	30	0	3	37.0	42	20	20	14	19	.309
Hanson, Thomas	7-3	3.39	15	15	0	82.1	61	34	31	31	93	.203
Heath, Deunte	3-4	4.26	9	9	0	50.2	48	32	24	25	38	.242
Jung, Sung Ki	2-2	5.09	42	0	6	53.0	52	34	30	21	52	.251
Marek, Stephen	0-2	3.24	6	0	0	8.1	9	3	3	5	4	.321
Medlen, Kris	5-6	3.50	32	13	1	103.0	104	40	40	22	97	.269
Nelson, Brad	1-0	4.47	23	1	1	46.1	53	30	23	14	30	.286
Nix, Michael	4-3	6.34	36	0	1	49.2	52	42	35	36	41	.271
Parr, James	8-4	3.69	18	17	0	95.0	87	40	39	37	81	.246
Payano, Nelson	3-2	3.95	27	0	0	43.1	41	22	19	22	36	.253
Redmond, Todd	10-5	3.50	24	23	0	144.0	141	62	56	25	112	.255
Sencion, Carlos	5-2	4.48	20	9	0	60.1	52	30	30	38	53	.236
Smith, Dan	1-7	6.16	14	12	0	61.1	81	45	42	34	47	.328
Valdez, Luis	3-3	3.14	49	0	24	57.1	45	30	20	34	68	.218


MYRTLE BEACH
79-39

 CAROLINA LEAGUE
ADVANCED A

 COASTAL FEDERAL FIELD
(843) 918-6002

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Arnold, Derrick (INF)	.290	9	31	2	9	2	1	0	1	4	8	2
Bennett, Paul (INF)	.189	12	37	2	7	1	0	0	3	2	13	1
Britton, Phillip (C)	.225	71	253	27	57	8	0	5	23	9	35	5
Cabrera, Willie (OF)	.299	105	428	79	128	30	3	14	71	33	45	6
Campbell, Eric (3B)	.260	68	258	50	67	13	0	17	58	41	45	4
Flowers, Tyler (C)	.295	105	356	64	105	26	1	15	75	86	85	7
Gress, Randy (INF)	.209	14	43	4	9	2	0	1	8	2	17	0
Hernandez, Gorkys (OF)	.284	80	328	64	93	20	6	5	39	38	62	18
Hicks, Brandon (SS)	.232	83	314	61	73	22	2	17	52	39	114	12
Jones, Travis (2B)	.261	108	395	67	103	25	3	16	72	62	97	12
Lundahl, Chad (INF)	.255	15	47	5	12	1	0	1	8	1	7	1
Marciel, Robert (INF)	.275	50	138	22	38	9	0	1	15	18	28	3
Mejia, Ernesto (1B)	.271	110	442	79	120	43	5	15	75	24	123	2
Owings, Jon (OF)	.290	102	355	60	103	24	4	16	59	32	78	9
Powell, Brandon (3B)	.225	33	120	15	27	6	0	3	11	10	31	4
Rodriguez, Concepcion (OF)	.295	88	308	50	91	23	4	9	48	30	52	7
Silva, Yohan (OF)	.211	31	95	20	20	6	1	1	6	11	22	2

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Broadway, Michael	2-2	3.18	16	2	2	39.2	29	17	14	14	25	.193
Butts, Brett	3-3	3.55	31	1	10	66.0	53	31	26	20	56	.217
Chapman, Jaye	2-1	2.65	8	0	0	17.0	17	5	5	5	14	.258
Cofield, Kyle	7-6	3.68	20	19	0	100.1	106	53	41	62	68	.277
Diamond, Scott	11-1	2.81	14	12	0	83.1	80	35	26	23	73	.248
Dumesnil, Bryan	3-0	1.18	32	0	12	38.0	24	11	5	20	53	.175
Fellman, Nicholas	4-3	3.99	37	0	6	47.1	47	24	21	18	46	.260
Gearrin, Cory	2-0	3.86	8	0	0	14.0	5	6	6	9	26	.109
Gunderson, Kevin	1-0	1.04	15	0	10	17.1	13	3	2	6	20	.197
Hanson, Thomas	3-1	0.90	7	7	0	40.0	15	6	4	11	49	.116
Heath, Deunte	9-2	3.11	14	14	0	84.0	78	40	29	41	53	.247
Lyman, Jeffrey	2-6	4.94	30	7	0	78.1	74	50	43	45	73	.252
Reynoso, Ryne	10-6	3.27	23	23	0	118.1	106	52	43	32	97	.241
Rivas, Carlos	4-2	4.83	21	3	0	50.1	50	39	27	23	35	.255
Tejeda, Ferdin	2-1	2.36	22	0	3	34.1	27	11	9	9	23	.216
Vines, Chris	4-1	3.98	20	13	2	86.0	86	44	38	21	77	.258
Wilson, Tyler	2-0	3.86	18	0	2	25.2	23	14	11	13	32	.237


ROME
48-70

 SOUTH ATLANTIC LEAGUE
CLASS A

 STATE MUTUAL STADIUM
(706) 368-9388

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Anderson, Chris (C)	.237	19	59	4	14	5	0	0	4	5	28	0
Berres, David (OF)	.251	62	195	16	49	5	0	1	18	38	46	3
Coe, Adam (3B/2B)	.238	90	340	33	81	25	1	5	36	11	84	5
Dominguez, Javier (C)	.207	39	140	10	29	4	1	1	8	11	33	6
Fisher, Michael (SS/2B)	.251	106	394	49	99	18	2	4	30	28	83	9
Freeman, Frederick (1B)	.314	114	439	62	138	30	6	18	85	42	71	5
Heyward, Jason (OF)	.324	108	407	82	132	23	5	11	50	46	70	15
Johnson, Benji (C)	.232	57	203	21	47	5	0	4	14	16	39	2
Johnson, Cody (OF)	.252	108	405	50	102	25	0	20	68	33	161	8
Kennelly, Mathew (C)	.457	10	35	4	16	5	0	0	10	2	8	0
Lee, Carlos (OF)	.236	83	296	32	70	14	3	2	24	19	76	10
Lundahl, Chad (INF)	.244	56	209	18	51	11	1	4	23	5	34	0
Miles, Cole (2B)	.248	103	395	51	98	8	3	1	15	29	67	27
Rodriguez, Concepcion (OF)	.267	19	60	8	16	2	0	3	13	12	16	1
Shultz, Stephen (OF)	.204	15	49	4	10	1	0	3	6	1	13	0
Silva, Yohan (OF)	.204	19	54	11	11	4	0	2	4	16	13	2
Time, Samuel (3B)	.221	64	226	30	50	8	1	4	19	7	47	10



DANVILLE

28-25

APPALACHIAN LEAGUE
ROOKIE ADVANCEDLEGION FIELD
(434) 797-3792

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Anderson, Chris (C)	.100	5	10	1	1	1	0	0	2	3	4	0
Berres, David (OF)	.300	6	20	4	6	0	0	1	5	6	4	0
Campusano, Joel (2B)	.271	37	140	22	38	6	3	0	15	15	19	3
Elkerson, Mike (OF)	.205	24	83	17	17	6	1	1	10	7	32	0
Fuller, Chais (INF)	.308	37	130	23	40	11	0	2	14	9	25	1
Gilmore, Jon (3B)	.333	53	204	21	68	20	0	3	26	10	29	0
Gress, Randy (2B/SS)	.417	8	24	8	10	4	1	0	5	1	8	1
Kennelly, Mathew (C)	.226	32	124	11	28	7	0	2	17	5	28	0
Miles, Kuyaunnis (OF)	.225	26	89	10	20	2	1	1	8	3	32	2
Moody, Shayne (SS)	.301	48	193	28	58	11	1	0	14	18	33	0
Parra, Camilo (OF)	.300	8	30	3	9	1	0	0	4	0	5	1
Redden, Ray (C)	.190	9	21	0	4	0	0	0	1	3	4	0
Rodriguez, Gerardo (1B)	.261	49	188	27	49	10	3	11	46	15	55	0
Shehan, Chris (OF)	.274	51	186	26	51	8	1	5	17	20	44	2
Sucre, Jesus (C)	.198	37	131	14	26	1	0	3	13	4	22	1
Ware, L.V. (OF)	.267	51	191	35	51	8	5	2	29	9	48	8
White, Will (OF)	.245	22	49	10	12	2	0	0	2	5	15	4

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Bullard, Adam	1-1	1.74	10	0	0	20.2	22	9	4	5	23	.265
Clemens, Paul	3-1	3.35	9	5	1	40.1	42	22	15	14	38	.266
Delgado, Randall	2-7	3.14	11	11	0	51.2	47	24	18	26	65	.250
Francis, David	4-2	2.09	8	5	0	38.2	24	13	9	11	52	.179
Himpls, Derick	0-1	5.82	12	0	0	17.0	20	14	11	18	24	.294
Hodges, Casey	4-3	1.20	10	10	0	60.0	41	14	8	13	47	.194
Kent, Steven	0-0	4.58	9	2	0	17.2	16	10	9	9	20	.250
Kimbrel, Craig	1-2	0.47	12	0	6	19.0	5	4	1	10	27	.076
Ladd, Timothy	0-1	5.52	7	2	0	14.2	15	11	9	11	10	.259
McMillan, Clayton	0-0	3.24	12	0	0	16.2	19	8	6	8	22	.275
Paulino, Angelo	1-2	4.19	11	7	1	38.2	37	23	18	14	46	.247
Railsback, Cody	4-1	4.73	12	1	1	32.1	42	22	17	6	34	.300
Reid, Rico	0-0	2.63	7	1	1	13.2	13	4	4	3	17	.236
Small, Matthew	1-2	2.55	13	0	6	17.2	13	5	5	6	27	.200
Sullivan, Richard	2-0	1.40	4	4	0	19.1	10	4	3	0	22	.149
Teheran, Julio	1-1	6.92	5	5	0	13.0	16	11	10	4	16	.314
Timms, Matt	1-1	2.45	7	0	0	11.0	11	3	3	2	18	.262



GULF COAST

22-22

GULF COAST LEAGUE
ROOKIECHAMPION STADIUM AT DISNEY
(407) 939-2301

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Adair, Travis (SS)	.299	41	164	23	49	5	1	0	17	15	31	9
Barnett, Tyler (2B/SS)	.183	24	71	7	13	1	0	0	4	5	18	1
Brooks, Robert (2B)	.336	33	110	24	37	6	4	2	15	11	18	10
Culver, Calvin (OF)	.263	44	171	20	45	14	2	1	18	12	27	3
Elorriaga-Matra, Daniel (C)	.350	17	60	11	21	5	0	1	11	1	6	1
Feliz, Anthony (OF)	.327	37	107	13	35	8	0	2	13	0	15	5
Hanson, Jake (3B)	.246	42	142	27	35	6	0	2	15	19	45	4
Henry, Rashod (OF)	.216	15	37	3	8	0	2	0	8	2	6	5
Hillier, Layton (OF)	.184	33	98	9	18	5	0	4	10	8	24	1
Kramer, Matt (C)	.167	4	6	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
Maddox, Chadwick (OF)	.229	31	105	12	24	10	0	2	14	3	18	1
Marval, Osman (C/INF)	.200	25	45	6	9	1	0	0	4	5	9	1
Parra, Camilo (OF)	.255	31	94	18	24	3	0	3	11	3	24	6
Schlehuber, Braeden (C)	.276	33	105	16	29	4	0	0	11	10	21	5
Shimabukuro, Ryohei (1B)	.234	35	111	9	26	4	0	1	12	5	12	0
Silva, Yohan (OF)	.143	3	7	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	3	1
Voelkel, Ryan (1B)	.220	28	50	6	11	2	0	2	11	9	10	0

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Avilan, Luis	0-2	2.90	8	3	0	31.0	27	13	10	12	39	.229
Bush, Paul	0-1	1.74	5	3	0	10.1	5	3	2	2	13	.135
Delgado, Dimaster	3-1	3.10	8	2	0	29.0	34	13	10	7	29	.276
DeVall, Brett	0-0	0.00	3	2	0	6.2	2	0	0	2	3	.095
Farrell, Kyle	0-3	5.11	7	4	0	24.2	30	16	14	11	17	.294
Hung, Chen-En	4-1	2.82	11	0	0	22.1	19	14	7	14	23	.226
Hyde, Lee	0-1	4.32	6	3	0	8.1	4	5	4	7	11	.138
Lagua, Eligio	0-0	3.60	12	0	3	15.0	14	6	6	8	16	.250
Lopez, Daniel	1-4	1.99	15	0	3	22.2	25	10	5	9	21	.278
Murillo, Eliezer	0-3	4.96	12	0	1	16.1	14	10	9	12	10	.233
Oberholtzer, Brett	3-1	2.97	8	0	0	30.1	30	14	10	7	24	.259
Reid, Rico	0-1	1.00	4	0	0	9.0	9	7	1	2	8	.237
Rodriguez, Santos	1-1	2.08	10	0	4	21.2	11	5	5	6	31	.145
Santiago, Jose	0-0	4.91	6	4	0	11.0	10	6	6	3	11	.227
Spruill, Ezekiel	6-0	2.25	8	2	0	32.0	31	11	8	6	28	.254
Stovall, Robert	1-0	6.10	4	1	0	10.1	10	7	7	11	14	.244
Surinach, Julio	1-1	6.41	7	0	0	19.2	20	20	14	15	18	.253

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 45

Tommy John surgery. The righthander has displayed his noted power arm that touched 98 mph in the Royals' organization. In his first five starts with Rome, Cordier allowed five earned runs in 22 1/3 innings.



DANVILLE

ROOKIE ADVANCED

DANVILLE has remained in second place in the East Division throughout much of the Appalachian League season. The D-Braves once again have sported the best pitching staff in the rookie league, posting a league-best 2.84 ERA through Aug. 9...

Craig Hodges was only a game above the break-even mark through seven decisions, but the righthander led the Appalachian League with a 1.20 ERA. On Aug. 9, Hodges scattered four hits and did not walk a batter while striking out eight over seven innings in a 1-0 victory. Hodges surrendered one earned run or less in nine of his first 10 starts and gave up only 41 hits in his first 60 innings...

Randall Delgado's 2-7 record, including five straight losses at Dan Daniel Park, is misleading. Delgado dropped six straight decisions overall despite giving up as many as four runs only once in seven starts. His 3.14 ERA is evidence of his lack of run support...

Righthander **Julio Teheran** returned to the mound on Aug. 2 after being sidelined since June 23 with soreness in his right shoulder. He struggled in his fourth outing of the season, on Aug. 7, when he failed to get out of the second inning after allowing four runs on three hits, two walks and a hit batsman. The Braves are being cautious with the 17-year-old from Colombia, who is one of the youngest professional players in the United States...

Third baseman **Jon Gilmore** led the Appalachian League with 66 hits and 19 doubles through Aug. 9 while also ranking among the leaders with a .332 batting average. Gilmore suffered through a 1-for-26 slump from July 24-31 before reeling off a nine-game streak from Aug. 1-9, going 17-for-37...

First baseman **Gerardo Rodriguez** cooled off after hitting six home runs with 20 RBIs in 47 at-bats in June.



GULF COAST

ROOKIE

NORMALLY FIELDING one of the youngest teams in the Gulf Coast League does not result in a lot of wins for the Braves, but this year's team has held its own. The Braves split their first 44 games, good for

second place in the GCL East Division...

Brett DeVall returned to the mound on Aug. 7 after missing two weeks due to some soreness in his left arm and shoulder. The Braves' first pick in the 2008 draft did not allow an earned run in his first three outings, totaling 6 2/3 innings...

Zeke Spruill, Atlanta's second-round pick in June, won his first six decisions. The righthander was credited with the victory in six straight appearances, during which he allowed only three earned runs in 25 1/3 innings...

Santos Rodriguez registered 31 strikeouts in his first 21 2/3 innings. He has emerged as the GCL Braves' top closer with four saves in his first five opportunities...

Second baseman **Robert Brooks** ranks among the league leaders in batting average, on-base percentage and slugging percentage. Atlanta's 20th-round pick out of Wallace State (Ala.) Community College in June, Brooks had a nine-game hitting streak from July 9-18. He also hit safely in his 14 games, from July 20-Aug. 9...

Shortstop **Travis Adair**, a 13th-round draft pick in June out of Cleveland State (Tenn.) Community College, ranks among the league leader in hits, thanks in part to a seven-game hitting streak from Aug. 2-9.

MLB

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braves.com/tickets

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SECTION	REGULAR	PREMIUM*
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Outfield Pavilion**	\$22	\$26
Upper Box	\$12	\$16
Upper Reserved***	\$8	\$12
Upper Pavilion	\$6	\$6

* All Friday, Saturday games and Opening Day.
** All Wednesday games in this level are 2-for-1.
*** All Tuesday games in this level are 2-for-1.
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TERRACE LEVEL \$140

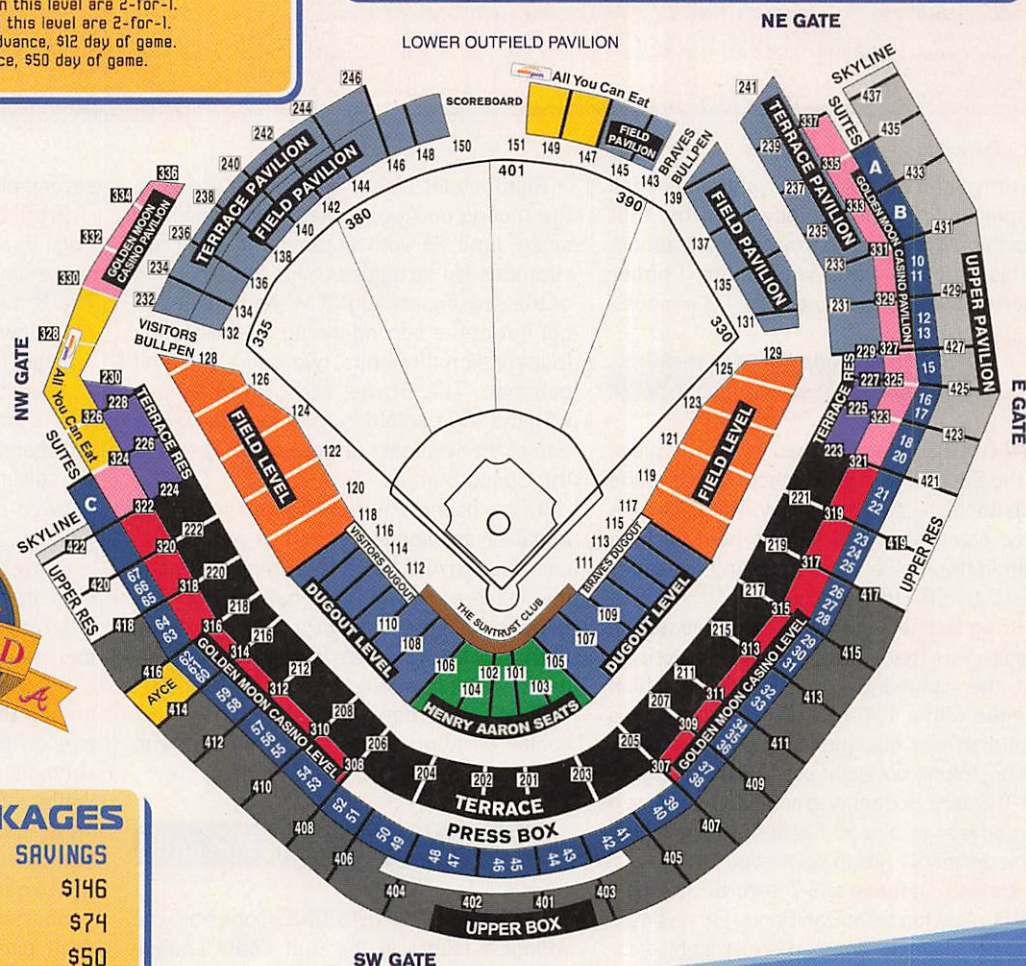
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SEPT. 18, 19, 20, 21

WEEKENDS

SEPT. 6, 7, 20, 21

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TICKET SPECIALS

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-  McDonald's Outfield Advantage: Wednesdays, Buy 1 Outfield Pavilion for \$22, Get 1 Free.
-  College Discount: Show college ID at Turner Field ticket window to get 2 Upper Box tickets for the price of 1.
-  Military Discount: Show ID at Turner Field ticket window to get 2 Upper Box tickets for the price of 1.
-  Topps Thursdays: Present/surrender 1 Topps baseball card wrapper at Turner Field ticket window to receive 1 Free Outfield Pavilion ticket with the purchase of 1 ticket of equal/greater value.

* All ticket offers subject to availability. Seating restrictions may apply. Not to be combined with any other discount, promotion or coupon. No reservations or tickets by phone or outlet. Free ticket offers can only be transacted at Turner Field ticket office.

MUSEUM & TOUR INFO

The Ivan Allen Jr. Braves Museum features more than 500 Braves artifacts that trace the team's history from its beginnings in Boston (1871-1952) to Milwaukee (1953-65) to Atlanta (1966-present). It is located on the northwest side of Turner Field at aisle 134. The museum opens two and a half hours before each game and closes in the middle of the seventh inning. The museum is open year-round and is the starting point of one-hour guided tours of Turner Field. Tours leave on the hour.

Tour reservations are not necessary for individuals or groups of less than 20 people. Tickets can be purchased the day of the tour at the main ticket window. Free parking in the Green lot.

Admission to the museum during games is one token (\$2) and \$5 on non-game days. Tour tickets are \$12 for adults, \$7 for children and \$10 for groups of 20 or more. Walk-up tickets can be purchased at the ticket window. Groups of 20 or more and school groups must make reservations two weeks in advance by calling (404) 614-2311.

HOURS OF OPERATION

APRIL - OCTOBER	
Monday - Saturday	9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Sunday	1 - 3 p.m.
OCTOBER - MARCH	
Monday - Saturday	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
DEC. 23-JAN. 3	CLOSED

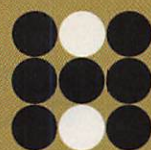
TOUR TICKETS

ADULTS	\$12
CHILDREN 13 and Under	\$7
MILITARY	\$7
GROUP	\$10

SCHOOL GROUP PRICES

CHILDREN	\$5
ADULTS	\$7

*Subject to change
Tours not available when the Braves have afternoon home games



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All games on WGST-AM (640), The Bull (94.9 FM), and Braves Network affiliates.



SEPTEMBER

TURNER FIELD

AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
31 1:35 PM WSH SS	1 1:10 PM FLA SS	2 7:10 PM FLA SS	3 1:10 PM FLA FSN	4 7:00 PM WSH FSN	5 7:30 PM WSH PTV	6 7:00 PM WSH SS
7 1:30 PM WSH SS	8	9 7:00 PM COL PTV	10 7:00 PM COL FSN	11 7:00 PM COL PTV	12 7:30 PM NYM ESPN	13 3:55 PM NYM FOX
14 1:10 PM NYM SS	15	16 7:00 PM PHI SS	17 7:00 PM PHI FSN	18 7:00 PM PHI PTV	19 7:30 PM NYM PTV/ESPN	20 7:00 PM NYM SS
21 1:30 PM NYM SS	22 7:05 PM PHI PTV	23 7:05 PM PHI PTV	24 7:05 PM PHI FSN	25	26 8:05 PM HOU SS	27 7:05 PM HOU SS
28 2:05 PM HOU SS	29	30				

OCTOBER

POST-SEASON DATES ARE TENTATIVE, UNOFFICIAL AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 08 DIVISION SERIES	2	3 NLDS 2008	4 NLDS 2008
5 NLDS 2008	6 NLDS 2008	7 NLDS 2008	8	9 08 LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES	10	11 NLCS 2008
12 NLCS 2008	13 NLCS 2008	14 NLCS 2008	15 NLCS 2008	16 NLCS 2008	17 NLCS 2008	18 NLCS 2008
19	20	21	22 WORLD SERIES 2008	23 WORLD SERIES 2008	24	25 WORLD SERIES 2008
26 WORLD SERIES 2008	27 WORLD SERIES 2008	28	29 WORLD SERIES 2008	30 WORLD SERIES 2008	31	

TENTATIVE; SUBJECT TO CHANGE

FOR SEASON, GROUP AND SUITE TICKET INFORMATION CALL (404) 577-9100 OR

braves.com



ROSTER

As of Aug. 11

PITCHERS (12)

*46 MANNY ACOSTA
30 JEFF BENNETT
56 BLAINE BOYER
26 FRANCISLEY BUENO
57 JORGE CAMPILLO
38 BUDDY CARPLYLE
*47 TOM GLAVINE
51 MIKE GONZALEZ
32 MIKE HAMPTON
*15 TIM HUDSON
49 JAIR JURRGENS
50 CHARLIE MORTON
48 VLADIMIR NUNEZ

*58 PETER MOYLAN
13 WILL OHMAN
*29 JOHN SMOLTZ
*39 RAFAEL SORIANO
54 JULIAN TAVAREZ

CATCHERS (2)

16 BRIAN MCCANN
5 CLINT SAMMONS

INFIELDERS (8)

19 YUNEL ESCOBAR
8 RUBEN GOTAY
4 OMAR INFANTE

2 KELLY JOHNSON
10 CHIPPER JONES
22 CASEY KOTCHMAN
20 GREG NORTON
14 MARTIN PRADO

OUTFIELDERS (3)

18 GREGOR BLANCO
*23 MATT DIAZ
7 JEFF FRANCOEUR
11 MARK KOTSAY

* DISABLED LIST

INDIVIDUAL STATS

AS OF 8/11/08

BATTERS

	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	TB	BB	SO	SB	CS	OBP	SLG	E
JONES	.370	92	327	63	121	16	1	19	58	196	62	44	2	0	.467	.599	9
RIGHT	.409		115		47	5	1	3	15	63	20	12			.493	.548	
LEFT	.349		212		74	11	0	16	43	133	42	32			.453	.627	
SAMMONS	.333	8	18	2	6	0	0	1	3	9	1	2	0	0	.368	.500	0
PRADO	.310	40	84	15	26	7	3	1	17	42	10	9	1	1	.385	.500	4
MCCANN	.305	104	374	51	114	30	1	21	69	209	44	48	4	0	.383	.559	4
INFANTE	.304	59	184	24	56	15	3	3	25	56	16	26	0	0	.356	.467	8
KOTSAY	.289	78	284	36	82	13	2	5	33	114	21	28	2	3	.337	.401	0
ESCOBAR	.279	102	409	56	114	19	1	6	49	153	42	55	2	5	.347	.374	12
JOHNSON	.271	108	391	61	106	29	2	9	47	166	42	85	10	3	.341	.425	11
BLANCO	.262	105	343	45	90	10	4	1	26	111	57	74	10	4	.371	.324	1
DIAZ	.250	42	132	9	33	2	0	2	14	41	3	32	4	2	.270	.311	1
NORTON	.237	71	135	19	32	9	0	3	18	50	19	29	0	0	.331	.370	2
RIGHT	.146		41		6	2	0	1	5	11	5	12			.239	.268	
LEFT	.277		94		26	7	0	2	13	39	14	17			.370	.415	
AL	.438	6	16	2	7	2	0	0	4	9	2	4	0	0	.500	.563	1
FRANCOEUR	.226	112	438	49	99	22	2	9	49	152	30	85	0	1	.286	.347	3
GOTAY	.221	69	86	7	19	3	0	2	5	28	10	27	1	1	.302	.326	2
RIGHT	.130		23		3	0	0	0	0	3	4	9			.259	.130	
LEFT	.254		63		16	3	0	2	5	25	6	18			.319	.397	
KOTCHMAN	.205	12	44	5	9	2	1	0	5	13	4	4	0	0	.308	.295	0
AL	.287	100	373	47	107	24	0	12	54	167	18	23	2	1	.327	.448	2
ATLANTA	.267	118	4,060	544	1,085	221	24	105	522	1,669	449	740	38	21	.343	.411	74
OPPONENTS	.250	118	3,937	519	985	215	31	104	493	1,574	399	777	79	26	.322	.400	76

PINCH-HITTERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) Jones (.667-2-0-1), Diaz (.375-3-0-0), Norton (.310-9-0-7), Prado (.308-4-1-7), Infante (.286-2-0-3), Blanco (.250-1-0-0), Gotay (.245-12-1-2), Johnson (.200-1-1-4), McCann (.200-1-0-0), Escobar (.000-0-0-0), Francoeur (.000-0-0-0), Kotsay (.200-1-0-0), Glavine (.000-0-0-0), TEAM (.275-36-3-24).

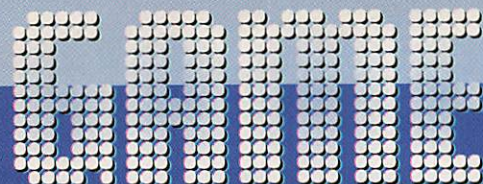
PITCHERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) Hampton (.286-2-0-3), Carlyle (.286-2-0-0), Bennett (.222-20-1), Campillo (.152-5-0-2), Hudson (.146-6-0-2), Jurrjens (.109-5-0-0), Glavine (.105-2-0-1), Morton (.100-1-0-0), Acosta (.000-0-0-0), Boyer (.000-0-0-0), Nunez (.000-0-0-0), Smoltz (.000-0-0-1), STAFF (.149-25-0-10).

BATTING KEY: Batting average, SLG-Slugging percentage, OBP-On-base percentage, G-Games, AB-At-bats, R-Runs, H-Hits, 2B-Doubles, 3B-Triples, HR-Home runs, RBI-Runs batted in, TB-Total bases, BB-Walks, SO-Strikeouts, SB-Stolen bases, CS-Caught stealing, E-Errors

PITCHING KEY: W-L-Wins-Losses, ERA-Earned run average, GS-Starts, GF-Games finished, SV-Saves, IP-Innings pitched, HB-Hit batters, WP-Wild pitches, OBA-Opponents' batting average.

PITCHERS

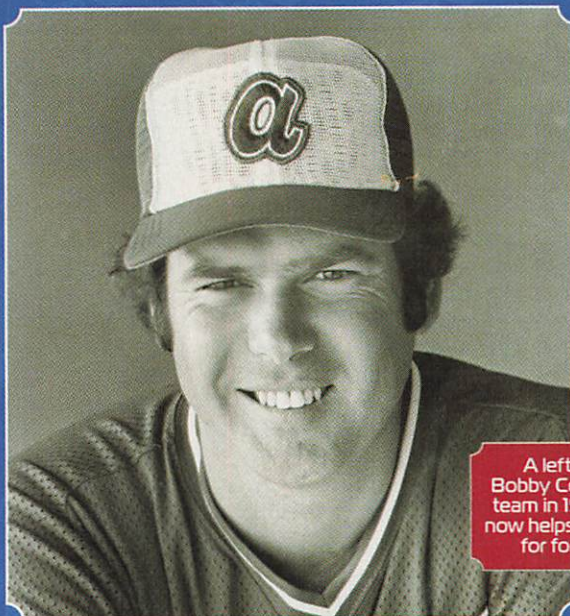
	W-L	ERA	G	GS	GF	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	HB	BB	SO	WP	OBA
MOYLAN	0-1	1.59	7	0	2	1	5.2	5	1	1	1	1	1	5	0	.217
NUNEZ	0-0	2.08	6	0	3	0	8.2	6	2	2	0	0	4	8	0	.188
GONZALEZ	0-0	2.45	18	0	16	5	18.1	14	10	5	2	1	3	21	0	.203
SMOLTZ	3-2	2.57	6	5	0	0	28	25	8	8	2	0	8	36	2	.229
SORIANO	0-1	2.57	14	0	5	3	14	7	5	4	1	1	9	16	1	.149
OHMAN	3-0	2.63	61	0	13	1	48	33	17	14	2	1	18	45	2	.192
CAMPILLO	7-4	2.83	30	16	3	0	114.1	100	40	36	10	0	21	81	1	.238
HUDSON	11-7	3.17	23	22	1	0	142	125	53	50	11	2	40	85	3	.239
JURRJENS	11-7	3.18	23	23	0	0	144.1	139	59	51	8	2	51	103	1	.251
CARLYLE	0-0	3.69	27	0	4	0	39	34	17	16	4	1	16	40	3	.234
ACOSTA	3-5	4.02	41	0	19	3	47	44	25	21	7	1	24	25	3	.256
BENNETT	2-4	4.28	47	4	10	3	69.1	67	33	33	5	6	35	52	5	.261
BOYER	2-6	4.84	63	0	14	1	61.1	58	37	33	7	2	18	53	0	.248
GLAVINE	2-3	4.85	12	12	0	0	59.1	60	33	32	9	1	33	34	0	.276
TAVAREZ	0-2	4.91	19	0	6	0	18.1	20	14	10	1	2	10	19	0	.274
ATL	0-1	2.45	12	0	5	0	11	7	4	3	1	2	5	9	0	.184
AL	0-1	6.39	9	0	2	0	12.2	18	12	9	0	1	9	6	1	.346
MORTON	3-5	5.70	10	10	0	0	53.2	55	36	34	6	2	22	32	2	.262
HAMPTON	1-1	8.10	4	4	0	0	20	24	18	18	2	0	9	6	0	.304
ATLANTA	55-63	4.08	118	118	116	17	1,048.2	985	519	475	104	35	399	777	27	.250
OPPONENTS	63-55	4.29	118	118	114	27	1,051.2	1,085	544	501	105	30	449	740	29	.267



BY GAME

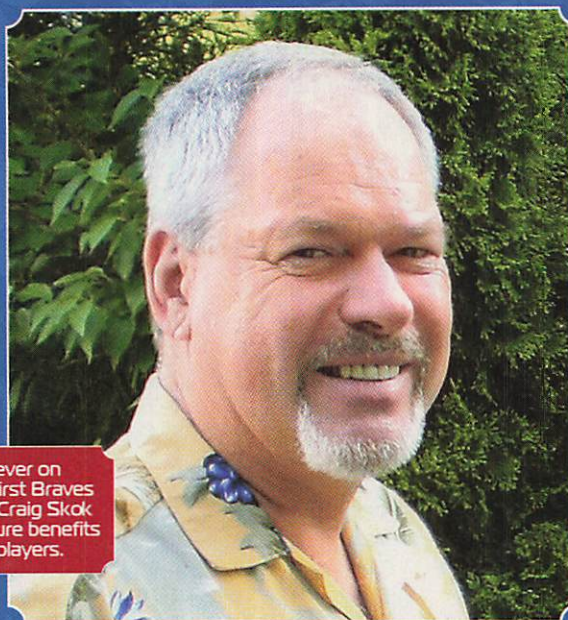
GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRS	REC	POS	GB
1	3/30	WAS	A	L	2-3	Moylan (0-1)	Jones (1)	0-1	5	-1/2
2	3/31	PIT	H	L	11-12 (12)	Boyer (0-1)	McCann (1), Francoeur (1)	0-2	5	-2
3	4/2	PIT	H	W	10-2	Jurrjens (1-0)	Diaz (1), Teixeira (1), Escobar (1)	1-2	T-3	-2
4	4/3	PIT	H	L	3-4 (10)	Resop (0-1)	--	1-3	5	-2
5	4/5	NYM	H	W	11-5	Hudson (1-0)	Johnson (1)	2-3	T-4	-1
6	4/6	NYM	H	W	3-1	Smoltz (1-0)	Teixeira (2)	3-3	T-1	--
7	4/7	COL	A	L	1-2	Boyer (0-2)	--	3-4	T-2	-1
8	4/8	COL	A	L	3-4	Jurrjens (1-1)	Kotsay (1)	3-5	T-3	-1 1/2
9	4/9	COL	A	L	6-12	James (0-1)	McCann (2)	3-6	T-4	-2 1/2
10	4/11	WAS	A	W	3-0	Hudson (2-0)	Escobar (2)	4-6	4	-3
11	4/12	WAS	A	W	10-2	Smoltz (2-0)	Francoeur 2 (3), McCann (3)	5-6	4	-2
12	4/13	WAS	A	L	4-5	Glavine (0-1)	Jones (2)	5-7	4	-2
13	4/15	FLA	A	L	0-4	Jurrjens (1-2)	--	5-8	4	-3
14	4/16	FLA	A	L	5-6	Hudson (2-1)	Escobar (3)	5-9	4	-4
15	4/17	FLA	A	W	8-0	Smoltz (3-0)	Jones 2 (4), Teixeira (3), McCann (4), Johnson (2)	6-9	4	-3
16	4/18	LAD	H	W	6-1	Ohman (1-0)	Jones 2 (6)	7-9	4	-2 1/2
17	4/19	LAD	H	W	4-1	James (1-1)	--	8-9	3	-2 1/2
18	4/20	LAD	H	W	6-1	Jurrjens (2-2)	Johnson (3), Teixeira (4)	9-9	3	-2
19	4/21	WAS	H	W	7-3	Hudson (3-1)	McCann (5)	10-9	3	-2
20	4/22	WAS	H	L	0-6	Smoltz (3-1)	--	10-10	4	-2
21	4/23	FLA	H	L	2-7	Bennett (0-1)	Diaz (2)	10-11	4	-3
22	4/24	FLA	H	W	7-4	James (2-1)	Jones (7)	11-11	4	-2
23	4/25	NYM	A	W	6-3	Jurrjens (3-2)	Johnson (4)	12-11	3	-2
24	4/26	NYM	A	L	3-4	Hudson (3-2)	--	12-12	4	-2
25	4/27	NYM	A	L	3-6	Smoltz (3-2)	--	12-13	4	-3
26	4/29	WAS	A	L	3-6	Boyer (0-3)	Jones (8)	12-14	4	-3
27	4/30	WAS	A	L	2-3 (12)	Acosta (0-1)	--	12-15	4	-3
28	5/2	CIN	H	W	2-0	Hudson (4-2)	McCann (6)	13-15	4	-3
29	5/3	CIN	H	W	9-1	Reyes (1-0)	--	14-15	4	-2
30	5/4	CIN	H	W	14-7	Ring (1-0)	Jones (9), Kotsay (2)	15-15	4	-2
31	5/6	SD	H	W	5-3	Jurrjens (4-2)	Jones (10), Kotsay (3)	16-15	T-3	-1 1/2
32	5/7	SD	H	W	5-2	Hudson (5-2)	--	17-15	T-3	-1 1/2
33	5/8	SD	H	W	5-4	Acosta (1-1)	--	18-15	3	-1 1/2
34	5/9	PIT	A	L	2-3	Bennett (0-2)	--	18-16	4	-2 1/2
35	5/10	PIT	A	L	2-5	James (2-2)	Teixeira (5)	18-17	4	-3 1/2
36	5/12 (1 of 2)	PIT	A	L	0-5	Jurrjens (4-3)	--	18-18	4	-4 1/2
37	5/12 (2 of 2)	PIT	A	W	8-1	Hudson (6-2)	McCann (7)	19-18	4	-3 1/2
38	5/13	PHI	A	L	4-5	Reyes (1-1)	--	19-19	4	-3 1/2
39	5/14	PHI	A	W	8-6	Glavine (1-1)	Escobar (4), Jones (11), Johnson (5)	20-19	4	-2 1/2
40	5/15	PHI	A	L	0-5	James (2-3)	--	20-20	4	-3
41	5/16	OAK	H	W	3-2	Acosta (2-1)	--	21-20	4	-2
42	5/17	OAK	H	L	4-5	Hudson (6-3)	--	21-21	4	-3
43	5/18	OAK	H	W	5-2	Reyes (2-1)	--	22-21	4	-2
44	5/20 (1 of 2)	NYM	H	W	6-1	Glavine (2-1)	McCann (8)	23-21	3	-1 1/2
45	5/20 (2 of 2)	NYM	H	W	6-2	Campillo (1-0)	Kotsay (4)	24-21	2	-1 1/2
46	5/21	NYM	H	W	11-4	Jurrjens (5-3)	Jones (12), Francoeur (4)	25-21	2	-1 1/2
47	5/22	NYM	H	W	4-2	Hudson (7-3)	--	26-21	2	-1 1/2
48	5/23	ARZ	H	L	1-11	Reyes (2-2)	--	26-22	2	-1 1/2
49	5/24	ARZ	H	W	3-1	Boyer (1-3)	Francoeur (5)	27-22	2	-1
50	5/25	ARZ	H	L	3-9	Glavine (2-2)	--	27-23	2	-2 1/2
51	5/26	ARZ	H	W	7-3	Acosta (3-1)	McCann (9)	28-23	2	-2 1/2
52	5/27	MIL	A	L	2-3	Bennett (0-3)	Johnson (6), Blanco (1)	28-24	3	-2 1/2
53	5/28	MIL	A	L	0-1	Reyes (2-3)	--	28-25	3	-2 1/2
54	5/29	MIL	A	W	8-1	Campillo (2-0)	Teixeira (6)	29-25	3	-2
55	5/30	CIN	A	L	2-3 (11)	Ring (1-1)	--	29-26	3	-2 1/2
56	5/31	CIN	A	L	7-8 (10)	Acosta (3-2)	Norton (1), Teixeira (7), Francoeur (6)	29-27	3	-3
57	6/1	CIN	A	L	2-6	Hudson (7-4)	Teixeira (8), McCann (10)	29-28	4	-3 1/2

GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRS	REC	POS	GB
58	6/2	FLA	H	W	7-5 (10)	Ohman (2-0)	Francoeur (7), Teixeira (9), Escobar (5)	30-28	3	-3 1/2
59	6/3	FLA	H	W	5-4	Ohman (3-0)	Jones (13)	31-28	3	-3 1/2
60	6/4	FLA	H	L	4-6	Acosta (3-3)	--	31-29	T-3	-3 1/2
61	6/5	FLA	H	W	7-5	Jurrjens (6-3)	Escobar (6), McCann (11), Jones (14)	32-29	3	-3 1/2
62	6/6	PHI	H	L	3-4 (10)	Acosta (3-4)	McCann (12)	32-30	3	-4 1/2
63	6/7	PHI	H	L	2-6	Reyes (2-4)	Jones (15)	32-31	3	-5 1/2
64	6/8	PHI	H	L	3-6	Boyer (1-4)	Teixeira (10)	32-32	3	-6 1/2
65	6/10	CHC	A	L	5-10	Glavine (2-3)	Norton (2)	32-33	3	-6 1/2
66	6/11	CHC	A	L	2-7	Bennett (0-4)	Miller (1)	32-34	3	-6 1/2
67	6/12	CHC	A	L	2-3 (11)	Acosta (3-5)	Francoeur (8)	32-35	3	-7 1/2
68	6/13	LAA	A	W	5-2	Reyes (3-4)	--	33-35	3	-7 1/2
69	6/14	LAA	A	W	9-4	Morton (1-0)	B. Jones (1), Johnson (7)	34-35	3	-6 1/2
70	6/15	LAA	A	L	0-2	Campillo (2-1)	--	34-36	3	-6 1/2
71	6/16	COL	A	W	7-1	Jurrjens (7-3)	--	35-36	3	-6 1/2
72	6/17	TEX	A	L	5-7	Hudson (7-5)	Infante (1), McCann (13)	35-37	3	-6 1/2
73	6/18	TEX	A	W	5-2	Bennett (1-4)	Jones (16)	36-37	3	-5 1/2
74	6/19	TEX	A	L	4-5	Boyer (1-5)	--	36-38	4	-6
75	6/20	SEA	H	L	2-10	Campillo (2-2)	--	36-39	4	-6
76	6/21	SEA	H	W	5-4	Boyer (2-5)	Gotay (1)	37-39	4	5
77	6/22	SEA	H	W	8-3	Hudson (8-5)	Teixeira 3 (13), McCann (14)	38-39	4	-4
78	6/23	MIL	H	L	1-4	Reyes (3-5)	--	38-40	4	-4 1/2
79	6/24	MIL	H	L	3-4	Morton (1-1)	Teixeira (14)	38-41	4	-4 1/2
80	6/25	MIL	H	W	4-2	Campillo (3-2)	--	39-41	4	-4 1/2
81	6/27	TOR	A	W	4-0	Jurrjens (8-3)	Teixeira (15)	40-41	T-3	-3
82	6/28	TOR	A	L	5-9	Hudson (8-6)	Teixeira (16)	40-42	T-3	-4
83	6/29	TOR	A	L	0-1	Reyes (3-6)	--	40-43	4	-4
84	7/1	PHI	H	L	3-8	Morton (1-2)	--	40-44	4	-5
85	7/2	PHI	H	L	3-7	Campillo (3-3)	Gotay (2), Jones (17)	40-45	4	-6
86	7/3	PHI	H	L	1-4	Jurrjens (8-4)	--	40-46	4	-7
87	7/4	HOU	H	W	6-2	Hudson (9-6)	Johnson (8)	41-46	4	-7
88	7/5	HOU	H	L	1-6	Reyes (3-7)	McCann (15)	41-47	4	-7
89	7/6	HOU	H	W	7-6 (17)	Ring (2-1)	Jones (18)	42-47	4	-6
90	7/7	LAD	A	L	0-3	Campillo (3-4)	--	42-48	4	-6
91	7/8	LAD	A	W	9-3	Jurrjens (9-4)	McCann 2 (17), Teixeira (17)	43-48	4	-5
92	7/9	LAD	A	L	1-2	Hudson (9-7)	Francoeur (9)	43-49	4	-6
93	7/11	SD	A	L	0-4	Reyes (3-8)	--	43-50	4	-7 1/2
94	7/12	SD	A	W	4-1	Morton (2-2)	Lillibridge (1)	44-50	4	-6 1/2
95	7/13	SD	A	W	12-3	Campillo (4-4)	McCann (18)	45-50	4	-6 1/2
96	7/18	WAS	H	W	7-6	Hudson (10-7)	--	46-50	4	-6 1/2
97	7/19	WAS	H	L	2-8	Jurrjens (9-5)	Norton (3)	46-51	4	-6 1/2
98	7/20	WAS	H	L	6-15	Reyes (3-9)	Teixeira 2 (19), Prado (1)	46-52	4	-6 1/2
99	7/21	FLA	A	W	4-0	Campillo (5-4)	--	47-52	4	-6
100	7/22	FLA	A	L	0-4	Morton (2-3)	--	47-53	4	-7
101	7/23	FLA	A	W	9-4	Hudson (11-7)	--	48-53	4	-6
102	7/25	PHI	A	W	8-2	Jurrjens (10-5)	McCann 2 (20)	49-53	4	-6 1/2
103	7/26	PHI	A	L	9-10	Boyer (2-6)	Teixeira (20)	49-54	4	-6 1/2
104	7/27	PHI	A	L	10-12	Tavarez (0-3)	Johnson (9), Infante (2)	49-55	4	-7 1/2
105	7/28	STL	H	L	3-12	Morton (2-4)	--	49-56	4	-7 1/2
106	7/29	STL	H	L	3-8	Soriano (0-1)	--	49-57	4	-8 1/2
107	7/30	STL	H	L	2-7	Jurrjens (10-6)	--	49-58	4	-9
108	7/31	STL	H	W	9-4	Bennett (2-4)	Infante (3), Sammons (1)	50-58	4	-9
109	8/1	MIL	H	L	0-9	James (2-4)	--	50-59	4	-9
110	8/2	MIL	H	L	2-4	Morton (2-5)	--	50-60	4	-9
111	8/3	MIL	H	W	5-0	Campillo (6-4)	--	51-60	4	-10
112	8/4	SF	A	L	2-4	Jurrjens (10-7)	--	51-61	4	-10 1/2
113	8/5	SF	A	W	11-4	Hampton (1-0)	--	52-61	4	-9 1/2
114	8/6	SF	A	L	2-3	James (2-5)	--	52-62	4	-10 1/2
115	8/7	ARZ	A	W	6-4	Morton (3-5)	Kotsay (5)	53-62	4	-9 1/2
116	8/8	ARZ	A	W	11-6	Campillo (7-4)	Jones (19)	54-62	4	-8 1/2
117	8/9	ARZ	A	W	11-4	Jurrjens (11-7)	McCann (21)	55-62	4	-8 1/2
118	8/10	ARZ	A	L	1-6	Hampton (1-1)	--	55-63	4	-9 1/2



ATLANTA BRAVES

A lefty reliever on Bobby Cox's first Braves team in 1978, Craig Skok now helps secure benefits for former players.



PHOTO

LEGENDARY ENCOUNTERS

Former Reliever **Craig Skok's** Most Memorable Moment Was a Hit, Not a Pitch

BY BRIAN KNAPP

CRAIG SKOK WORKS to better the lives of former players in a behind-the-scenes chess match between Major League Alumni Services (MLAS) and Major League Baseball.

On the national board of directors for MLAS, Skok - a lefty reliever with the Braves in 1978-79 - helps the organization locate affordable healthcare outlets for its members and promote youth baseball throughout the country. For the past several years, the MLAS, part of the Major League Baseball Players Alumni Association, has fought unsuccessfully to secure coverage under the Major League pension plan for some former players.

Until 1980 - when the requirement changed to 60 days of service - players were required to have a minimum of four years of service time to qualify for the pension. Though the change was viewed as a victory for many current and former players, close to 1,000 were left outside MLB's umbrella of financial security.

"Some of them played back in the 1940s and 1950s, guys who played in the big leagues but aren't recognized for their big-league time," Skok said. "Most people think former players are wealthy, but back then, and even in the 1960s and 1970s, there was not a lot of money to be made. Guys played with full-time jobs."

Skok concedes owners are under no obligation to cover pre-1980 players under the current pension plan. The efforts of the MLAS, however, have met with stiff opposition, a development Skok blames largely on the decision to file a lawsuit against Major League Baseball three years ago. The attempt to force MLB's hand backfired, and bad blood brewed between the two sides.

"The lawsuit was thrown out of court twice," Skok said. "It set

our efforts back, because Major League Baseball was not happy about it. They're not legally responsible to vest all these players. It's more of a moral issue. It's very frustrating to have guys out there who are in need of the pension."

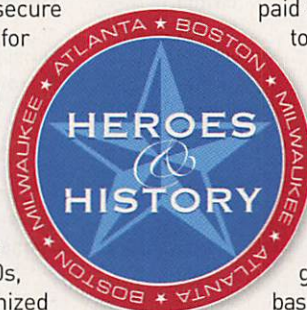
Despite the setbacks, Skok cites a number of MLAS achievements, especially in terms of providing affordable healthcare for its members, from basic orthopedic care to procedures as significant as heart surgery. The organization also works to secure paid speaking engagements as a way for former players to boost their income.

As president of the Atlanta chapter, Skok organizes a local annual golf tournament, the proceeds from which funnel into the alumni association and various charities. Benefits to the community have been many.

"We take 10 percent of the proceeds and disperse it locally," he said. "We've supported Little League programs, bought ad space on fence signs at high school baseball fields, and even bought uniforms for teams."

In addition to his part-time work for MLAS, which boasts some 6,000 members, Skok works full-time as a sales engineer for JST - a Japan-based company that specializes in electronic connectors. Married to his wife, Pat, for 25 years, he resides in Lawrenceville, just outside Atlanta, and serves a territory that includes Georgia, Tennessee and the panhandle of Florida. Though covered by the MLB pension plan, Skok has supplemented his income with a full-time job since he left baseball in 1980.

Skok was drafted twice (Boston and Minnesota) in 1967, when there were two phases, but didn't turn pro until 1969, when he signed as a free agent with Boston. He reached the big leagues with



the Red Sox in 1973 and was later traded to Texas as part of the deal that brought Hall-of-Fame righthander Ferguson Jenkins to Boston. However, Skok spent the majority of his brief time in the majors with the Braves after he signed as a free agent in 1978.

"I was a very average major league player," he said. "The time period in which I played in the major leagues had a number of Hall-of-Fame guys, and I had the chance to compete against them."

All 107 of Skok's career appearances came out of the bullpen. He remembers his first game in Atlanta in 1978, not for a pitch he threw, but for the double he hit off Tom Seaver, a man who would eventually win 311 games and record 3,640 strikeouts en route to Cooperstown. It was his first major league hit.

"I think I just closed my eyes," said Skok, who had two hits in 11 career at-bats (.182). "It was a lucky swing."

Another baseball legend met Skok when he arrived at second base.

"I slid into second," he said, "and Pete Rose stopped the game to get me the ball."

Skok made 87 of his 107 career appearances in a Braves uniform (the other 20 were with Boston and Texas). He posted a 4-5 record with four saves and a 4.18 earned run average. He struck out 58 batters in 116 1/3 innings, pitching out of the bullpen during Bobby Cox's first stint as Atlanta manager. The Braves finished sixth (last) both seasons, losing 93 games in 1978 and 94 in 1979. Even so, Cox made a lasting impression.

"He's the best guy I ever played for, without a doubt," Skok said. "You could count on what he told you. He's able to get the most out of every player, and I knew once he got the talent, it was only a matter of time before he succeeded."

When he failed to make the team out of spring training in 1980, Skok was sent to Richmond, where he pondered his future at Atlanta's longtime Triple-A affiliate. Soon, he made the decision to hang up his spikes. At age 33, he was out of baseball.

"I was miserable," he said. "I'd struggled long enough, and I really did not have the drive to do it any longer. I had already graduated from college (Florida State) and felt it was time. It was a fairly easy decision."

Skok declined an offer to become a roving pitching instructor for the Braves after he retired and never again returned to the game.

"I spoke to Hank Aaron [then director of player development] about it," he said. "I just wasn't willing to do what it took. It would have meant me being on the road for most of the summer. I never thought about it again."

HOW I MADE IT TO THE MAJORS

LAUREN CREEDON

PORTRAIT ARTIST

BY STEVE FALL

LAUREN CREEDON has always loved art and baseball. However, she never put the two subjects together until recently. When she did, good things happened.

One of the teachers in Creedon's school asked her to craft a portrait of Chipper Jones, because he was a big fan of the Braves star. She received a number of compliments on the piece that she drew with charcoal. Her father, Joe

Creedon, showed the portrait to Brett Rudy of Charity Hop, a company that provides the marketing support for Charity Wines. Rudy contacted Jones' agent B.B. Abbott, who shared the image with his client. This led to a new wine called Chipper Chardonnay (April '08 CT), with Creedon's artwork on the label.

Creedon, who enters her second year at Harvard University this fall, also drew portraits of Tom Glavine and Brian McCann for Charity Wines. They now appear on bottles of Cabernet Glavingnon and McCann Merlot. Profits from the wine sales benefit charities of each player's choice.

"I like to illuminate that special part of my subject's personality that makes them who they are, that might get lost in a photograph," said the 19-year-old Creedon, who lives in Stoneham, Mass., near Boston. "You have time to get to know your subject and illuminate what it is that you want your audience to see about them."

Creedon named her portrait of Jones, "Chipping Away." She described him as a hard worker "who still seems so young at heart" and set out to capture that in her drawing. She titled Tom Glavine's picture, "Grand Master Glavine."

"The more I saw him, the more I realized that the way he plays the game comes out in his personality," said Creedon of the Braves lefty. "He's like a grand master of chess, because he's all about using his guile to win, out-smarting his competition, and not overpowering them. When you can bring out a quality like that in a portrait, it's something that's so much more lasting than a photograph."

Creedon had yet to name her portrait of McCann. She tried to show the strength and intensity that he brings to the game. She enjoyed the thrill of meeting both McCann and Jones at a May wine tasting party held in Turner Field's 755 Club.

"I think it's great that there's a transfer of my art – combined with the image of these athletes – to make a difference and help a charity," she said. "These athletes inspire me by how involved they are with the community. It was a great chance to use my art to help do the same thing."

A big Red Sox fan, Creedon started playing baseball in the second grade on a boys' team. She later began playing softball and now participates in both sports. Three years ago, she joined the North American Women's Baseball League (NAWBL), where she plays mostly third base.

Creedon started drawing as a 2-year-old. She has worked with etching, paint, and pastels, but finds that charcoal brings out her creativity. She wants to go into business eventually, and is considering a joint concentration in English and studio art at Harvard.

"I'd love to keep doing portraits," said Creedon. "I love drawing athletes from the experience that I have had so far. And I'm going to see where it takes me. I'm not going to give up on my business hopes, though. Hopefully, the two will combine."



CHARITY HOP SPORTS CONSULTING



The childhood home of **Hank Aaron** (OF/1B, 1954-74), located in Mobile, Ala., will be moved to Hank Aaron Stadium in Mobile in October, where it will become a permanent museum. Artifacts from his career, including some loaned from the National Baseball Hall of Fame, will be on exhibit. Aaron attended a news conference at the house July 21 and spoke to the Mobile City Council about the project the following day. The city and the Mobile BayBears will move the house to the stadium's Gas Light Park, where it eventually will be open year-round. The plan is to open it to the public in March as part of a celebration of Aaron's 75th birthday (Feb. 5).

Phil Niekro (RHP, 1964-83, '87) was one of three new members elected to the 18-person board of directors of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

The **Joe Niekro** (RHP, 1973-74) Foundation, headed by the late pitcher's daughter, Natalie, will hold a fundraiser called the Knuckle Ball, a Pitch for Life, at Houston's Minute Maid Park Sept. 22 to benefit aneurysm research. The event begins at 6 p.m. and will include a reception with hors d'oeuvres, cocktails and casino gambling, followed by dinner and auction. The evening will culminate with performances by country music stars. **Phil Niekro** and other current and former major leaguers will attend, and Hall of Famer Joe Morgan will serve as emcee. For information, contact Natalie Niekro at nniekro@joeniekrofoundation.org or (602) 318-1013. Tickets start at \$236. Joe Niekro, who died of an aneurysm in 2006, played 10 of his 21 seasons with the Astros.

Billy Southworth (OF, 1921-23, Manager, 1946-51), who managed the Boston Braves to the 1948 National League pennant, was inducted posthumously into the National Baseball Hall of Fame July 27 in Cooperstown, N.Y. Bill DeWitt, chairman and CEO of the St. Louis Cardinals, accepted for

Southworth, who managed the Cardinals to two World Championships (1942, '44) and another NL pennant (1943). A ceremony in Southworth's honor also was held simultaneously at Green Lawn Cemetery in Columbus, Ohio, where he is buried.



Cardinals executive Bill DeWitt (L-R), Hall of Fame chair Jane Forbes Clark, and commissioner Bud Selig with Billy Southworth's plaque.

The Yankees traded **Kyle Farnsworth** (RHP, 2005) to Detroit July 30 for catcher Ivan Rodriguez.

Houston designated **Chad Paronto** (RHP, 2006-07) for assignment.

Toronto extended the contract of manager **Clarence "Cito" Gaston** (OF/1B, 1967, '75-78) thru 2009.

Johnny Estrada (C, 2003-05) was designated for assignment by Washington.

Seattle signed **Jorge Sosa** (RHP, 2005-06) to a minor league contract.

Cleveland traded **Paul Byrd** (RHP, 1997-98, 2004) to Boston Aug. 12 for future considerations.

Kansas City traded **Horacio Ramirez** (LHP, 2003-06) to the White Sox Aug. 9 for a minor league outfielder.

Mike Hessman (1B, 2003-04) was named to the U.S. Olympic team.

The Rockies designated **Mark Redman** (LHP, 2007) for assignment.

BIRTHDAYS

SEPTEMBER

1 ST	TOM BURGESS (81)
	RICO CARTY (69)
	CRAIG SKOK (61)
3 RD	DAVE CAMPBELL (57)
	TOM THOBE (39)
	CHAD FOX (38)
4 TH	DOYLE ALEXANDER (58)
6 TH	MIKE THOMPSON (59)
	GREG OLSON (48)
	FRANK BROOKS (30)
7 TH	SERGIO VALDEZ (44)
	DARREN BRAGG (39)
8 TH	LOU SLEATER (82)
	STEVE HARGAN (66)
9 TH	MIKE HAMPTON (36)
	KYLE DAVIES (25)
10 TH	PRESTON HANNA (54)
	NICK GREEN (30)
	DANYS BAEZ (31)
12 TH	STAN LOPATA (83)
	TRENCH DAVIS (48)
13 TH	MIKE FISCHLIN (53)
	DENNY NEAGLE (40)
14 TH	JOE WINKELAS (35)
	GEORGE LOMBARD (33)
15 TH	GAYLORD PERRY (70)
	DON COLLINS (56)
16 TH	ROGER MORET (59)
17 TH	ORLANDO CEPEDA (71)
	BOBBY WINE (70)
18 TH	BRENT LILLIBRIDGE (25)
19 TH	VERN BENSON (84)
	JOE DAWLEY (37)
	JOEY DEVINE (25)
20 TH	RICH MORALES (65)
	RORIC HARRISON (62)
	DAVE GALLAGHER (48)
22 ND	KEN ASPROMONTE (77)
	LOU JOHNSON (74)
23 RD	WOODY WOODWARD (66)
	JIM MORRISON (56)
	BRIAN ASSELSTINE (55)
24 TH	MIKE KRSNICH (77)
	ROD GILBREATH (56)
	JIM ACKER (50)
	BERNARD GILKEY (42)
	JESSE GARCIA (35)
25 TH	JIM WESSINGER (53)
	GLENN HUBBARD (51)
	RAY HOLBERT (38)
26 TH	DOUG SISK (51)
	DAVE MARTINEZ (44)
	MATT MURRAY (38)
28 TH	CHARLEY KERFELD (45)
29 TH	HOWIE BEDELL (73)



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1. To contract with individuals on the basis of their qualifications and with assurance of equal opportunity and treatment, regardless of race, color, creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or handicap.
2. To not knowingly accept any advertisement which implies any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or handicap.

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THE BEST OF SKIP

BRAVES FANS from coast-to-coast suffered heartbreak Aug. 3 when Skip Caray passed away. ChopTalk readers felt it more than other fans, because they also lost a columnist who was part of this magazine since its initial launch in January 1994.

We think his written words could be just as entertaining and informative as his spoken words, so we want to close this special report on Skip by giving you some of his more memorable CT column excerpts.

Skip's first column was titled: "The Ramblings of a Rookie Writer." In it, he went out on a bit of a limb with this prediction.

"The Atlanta Braves have a very good chance of going down in history as one of baseball's last dynasties. I know that is a huge statement, but this is a team without apparent weakness, and it's a team that figures to be at or near the top of the heap for at least the next six or seven years."

Well, he was a few years shy of predicting 14 straight division titles, but he was in the ballpark. Remember, that was in the winter of 1994, when the division title streak was at three.

Skip was well-known for his witty, though often sarcastic comments to fans who would call his radio show and ask questions he felt he'd either already answered or that didn't deserve to be answered. We also followed a Q&A format in his CT column for several years, and naturally, that produced some memorable lines. Some examples:

Q: Have you ever been in a movie?

Skip: Yes. Pete, Ernie, John Sterling and I were in a little lovely called "The Slugger's Wife." It starred Rebecca DeMornay and darn near ruined her career. We still get \$7 residual checks about twice a year.

Q: What was the most embarrassing mistake you ever made on the air?

Skip: I admit to making a lot more than one, but I guess my worst boo-boo was mispronouncing the name of Phillie Phanatic third baseman Mike Schmidt. You can probably figure out how I pronounced it, and Ernie Johnson makes sure I never forget it.

Q: When a foul ball goes into the stands, how do you know where the fan is

from who retrieves it?

Skip: Years of experience with Atlanta fans have made me an expert on the body language employed by fans from various sectors of the Atlanta metropolitan area and the Southeast as a whole. I have also spent a good deal of time studying under sports psychologists, and that has helped me identify fans. I am told that I am right nearly 98.8 percent of the time, and I defy any other announcer to do that well. It has really been a life's work.

Q: How did you get so sexy?

Skip: I don't want you to panic, but you should drop whatever you are doing immediately and seek an eye care professional. If, after the vision test and the corrective lenses you still think I'm sexy, I'm afraid you are going to have to undergo psychiatric care. God bless you!



A reminder for those who may be experiencing slow delivery. ChopTalk is mailed each month *no later than* the date mentioned in this space. *Every month.* The only exceptions are when it is mailed a day *earlier* than noted here.

We understand you are anxious to get your issue, and we are equally anxious for you to receive it. However, if you don't get it when you think you should, we suggest you contact customer service at your local post office and ask for a "postal watch" to be placed on your ChopTalk. Once we drop it in the mail, delivery is out of our control.

This past month, we had more reports of slow delivery than we've had for a while. We pressed the post office for an answer about why that occurred, but we've received no explanation at this time. We will continue to try to hold the post office accountable for the way they handle your magazine, and we strongly urge you to do the same.

Any issue not delivered by the 10th of the month (but not before) will be replaced at no cost when the subscriber contacts us by phone or e-mail.

THIS ISSUE OF CHOPTALK was mailed Aug. 21. The October issue will be mailed Sept. 19.



Tom Glavine's wife, Chris, and daughter, Amber, look happy to be wearing Braves shirts instead of Mets shirts this Family Day. Chipper Jones serves a sweet pitch to his youngest son, Tristan.

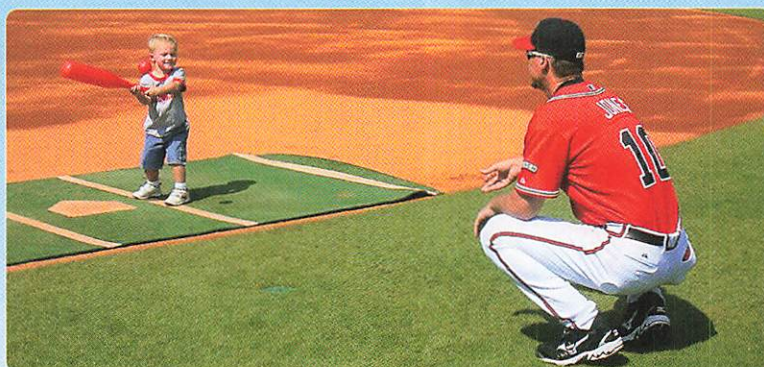
BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

FAMILY OUTING

BRAVES FAMILY DAY was held Sunday, Aug. 3, prior to the game against the Brewers. It was scorching hot at 11 a.m. when the families took the field, but that didn't slow down any of the many children from playing impromptu Wiffle ball games, running the bases, and generally having a blast. **Chipper Jones** was first on the field with three of his four sons, **Trey**, **Shea** and **Tristan**. His wife, **Sharon**, recorded the fun for the family albums with her digital camera. Most of the wives came similarly prepared with digital cameras. The **Tom Glavine** family was back for their first Braves Family Day in five years. With a ballfield at home to practice on, Glavine's boys (**Jonathan**, **Peyton** and **Mason**), and even Tom's wife, **Chris**, were willing to stand in and take their swings. **Will** and **Allyson Ohman** had their hands full with twins **Jack** and **Annabel** going in opposite

directions for most of the day. **Greg Norton**'s young son, **Jace**, was a willing catcher for anyone who stepped to the plate. Young married couples without children were in attendance, as well. Wives **Catie Francoeur** (**Jeff**), **Ashley McCann** (**Brian**), **Lauren Johnson** (**Kelly**), **Ginsey Boyer** (**Blaine**), and **Meredith Sammons** (**Clint**) were photographed with their husbands and oohed and aahed over the children. **Tess Hudson**, daughter of **Tim** and **Kim Hudson**, cooled down by pouring cup after cup of water over her head, and Tim playfully doused Kim when she was standing in the dugout. The families left the field at noon for their annual picnic under the pavilion. Because it was getaway day for the West coast road trip, most players said their goodbyes right there, so the hot and tired kids and their moms could get home!

PHOTOS: PATTY RASMUSSEN



CATIE FRANCOEUR and **Meredith Sammons** accompanied their husbands on the West coast road trip, Aug. 4-10, traveling to San Francisco and Arizona...

Senior baseball advisor **Bobby Dews** was to be the convocation speaker, Aug. 28, at Andrew College in Cuthbert, Ga., near Dews' hometown of Edison. Dews is a writer-in-residence at Andrew College in the off-season, reading the work of and encouraging young writers...

Kim Hudson and family made the trip to Miami July 21-25, the same week **Tim** felt the first twinge in his elbow that ultimately sent him to the disabled list and to season-ending surgery. She and the kids, **Kennedie**, **Tess**, and **Kade**, spent most of their time poolside or on the beach with friends...

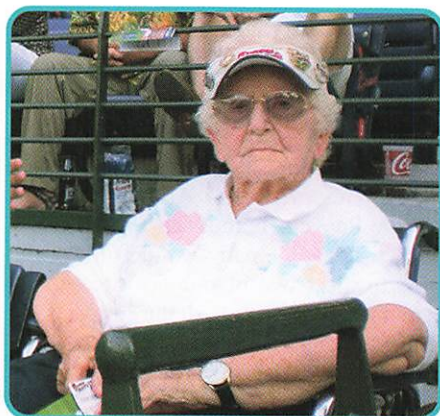
Kim Hudson has a "connection" at Turner Field's SunTrust Club, the exclusive new seats and private club behind home plate. The third baseman on her Peachtree City recreational softball team is **Rusty Cortese**, the

concierge at the SunTrust Club...

Tim Hudson teamed with former Braves catcher **Johnny Estrada** for an autograph signing at Cold Stone Creamery, July 19, in Newnan, Ga., where the Estradas live. The signing raised money for **Jen Estrada's** participation in the **Susan G. Komen 3-Day Walk for Breast Cancer** in October...

Mike Hampton's family wasn't in Atlanta for Family Day, though with good reason. Hampton's wife, **Kautia**, was out of the country, and his sons, **Gage** and **Griffin**, were in Cooperstown, N.Y., for a 99-team Little League tournament. The boys were accompanied by their grandmother and aunt. Gage plays for a North Scottsdale, Arizona, team. "He throws right and bats left," said Hampton. "Believe me, I always handed things to his left hand!" The youngster plays shortstop and pitches...

It's a girl for former Braves pitcher **Tyler Yates** and his wife, **Liesel**! Their daughter, **Kamryn Hi'ilei** was born July



Shortly before her 100th birthday, long-time fan Nina Veal attended her first Braves game and got to meet many of the players and their families.

the Dunwoody home of **Jean Berken**, a Braves 400 Club member. The first book selected is "I Had A Hammer" by the Braves' own **Hank Aaron**. The baseball

book club is Berken's brainchild. She will host the monthly meetings at her "baseball café," surrounded by baseball memorabilia collected during her 19 years compiling boxscores of Braves games for Stats LLC. For more information about the baseball book club, contact the Braves 400 Club at (770) 416-4539, or at braves400.org.

31, weighing in at 7 pounds, 3 ounces. Congratulations!...

When the Braves hosted "Nuestro Campo," a baseball clinic for 100 Latino youth, ages 11-13, on July 18, at the Atlanta Braves Baseball Academy, **Mike Gonzalez** was unable to participate due to a dental appointment. However, many of the kids wore t-shirts proclaiming themselves members of "Gonzo's G-Unit," the group he sponsors with game tickets through the "Reach Out Be Our Guest" program. He later was able to meet them...

Braves president **John Schuerholz** was hobbled by surgery to remove bone spurs from his left foot. Schuerholz wore a boot cast and used crutches when he attended the private family service for **Skip Caray** on Aug. 7...

Chip Caray and his wife, **Susan**, are expecting their fourth child in December. The couple has a daughter, **Summerlyn**, and twin sons, **Stefan** and **Christopher**...

Watching Braves baseball keeps fans young, according to **Nina "Grandmama" Veal**, who was to celebrate her 100th birthday on Aug. 28. After years of watching the Braves on TV, Mrs. Veal attended her first Braves game in person on July 5 and had the thrill of a lifetime when **Ronnie Snitker**, wife of Braves third base coach **Brian Snitker**, arranged for her to visit the Braves Family Room. One player after another came in to meet Grandmama Veal, who has seven children, 14 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren, with two arriving in August, and seven great-great grandchildren. One of Mrs. Veal's grandsons is an annual participant in **Tim** and **Kim Hudson's** Baseballs and Birdies Golf Tournament held during spring training in Orlando...

Love baseball and love to read? The first get-together of the Baseball Book Club will be held on Thursday, Sept. 25, at 7 p.m., at



Brian McCann's wife, Ashley, helps Rally Foundation boys Sean Dever and Andrew Vassil enjoy a special outing at a Braves game.

RALLY TIME

BRIAN AND ASHLEY McCann sponsored an on-field visit, July 28, for four Rally Foundation children. **Margaret Hurt**, **Sean Dever**, **Andrew Vassil**, all 12 years old, and **Alexa Rohrbach**, 11, each suffer from different types of cancer and were special guests of the McCanns, gathering autographs and pictures with players during batting practice. Another Rally Foundation child, **Max Osborne**, 12, served as honorary team captain for the game, accompanying **Brian Snitker** to home plate to deliver the lineup card. The kids were then allowed to visit the lobby of the Braves' clubhouse for photos with McCann, who was not on the field due to the concussion he sustained July

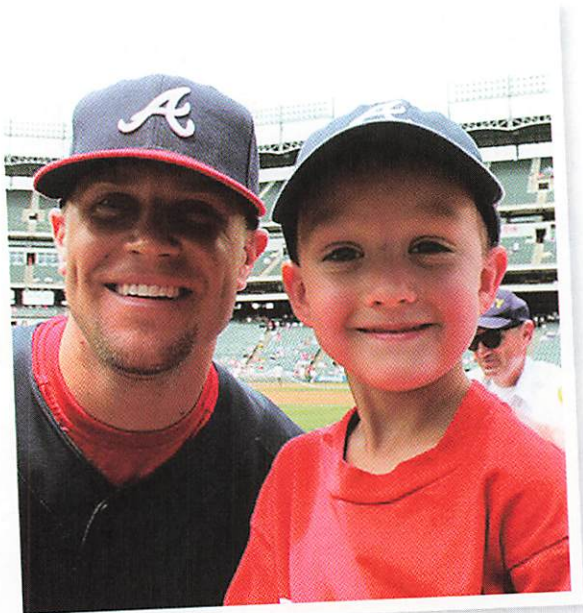
27. Ashley took the group to one of the Turner Field pavilions for a submarine sandwich feast prior to the game.

The McCanns are enthusiastic supporters of the Rally Foundation. They will serve as honorary chairs of its 2nd Annual Benefit Bash to be held Nov. 13 at the Atlanta History Center. Among last year's attendees were McCann, **Chipper Jones**, **Tom Glavine**, **Chuck James**, and former pitching coach **Leo Mazzone**. Fans wishing to attend the event, which includes silent and live auctions, can go to the foundation's website, rally-foundation.org, click on the "participate" tab and look for "Benefit Bash." Tickets are \$125 a person and are expected to sell out.

TALKIN' CHOP

LETTERS & PHOTOS FROM OUR READERS

WHETHER YOU'RE HAVING FUN AT TURNER FIELD, EXPERIENCING A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH YOUR FAVORITE BRAVES PLAYER, OR JUST SHOWING OFF YOUR COLLECTION OF BRAVES STUFF OR TRYING ON YOUR NEW BRAVES SHIRT, WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT AND SEE A PICTURE.



TEXAS TREASURES

I have been a Braves fan all my life, and my children are following right along. We traveled to Arlington when the Braves played the Rangers, because my husband is a Rangers fan. We left with many wonderful memories. We were able to meet two of our favorite players, Brian McCann and Jeff Bennett (L). All the guys we met were so nice to the kids. They each took time to talk to them, shaking their hands, and even taking some pictures. Thanks to all of them for making my kids' day at the ballpark a day they will always remember!

BECKY WELCH
Henderson, Tenn.

TERRIFIC TWOSOME

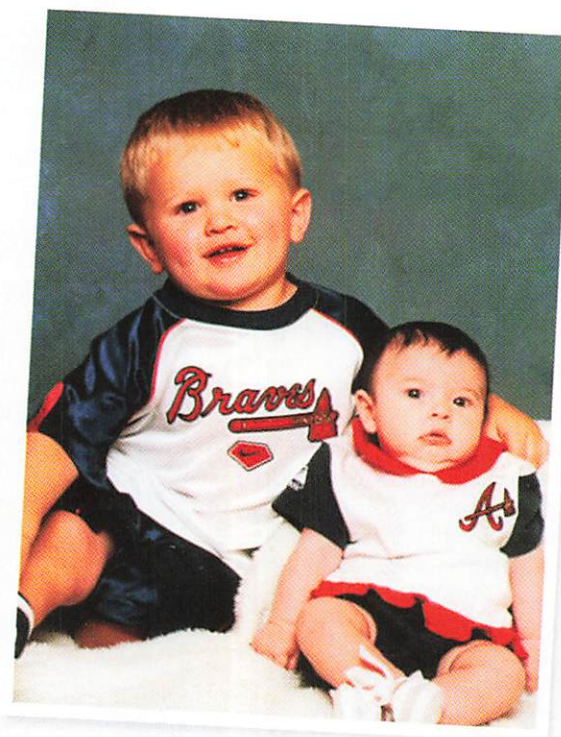
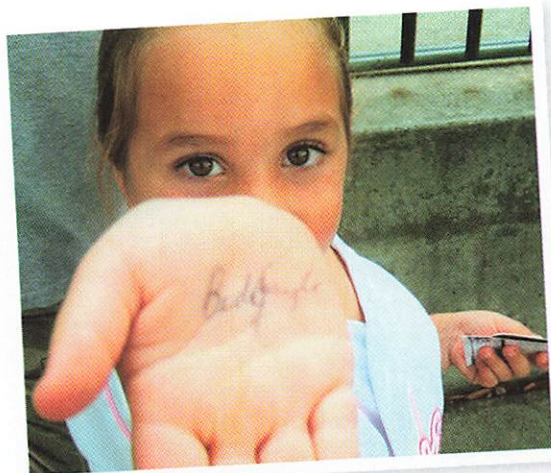
I am a Braves fan, and these are my two grandkids - Mason Anderson (22 months) and Clara Powell (12 weeks). I dressed them up in Braves clothes just for this picture.

CHERYL ANDERSON
Pensacola, Fla.

HANDY WORK

I grew up as a Braves fan, and I'm now 41. I take my family from North Carolina to Turner Field two times each season. We're all hooked! It's a six- to seven-hour trip, but we're always ready to go. My little girl, Mackenzie, "sweet-talked" Buddy Carlyle into signing her hand by "promising" never to wash it again!

CRAIG CARR
Clinton, N.C.



CHOPTALK AND THE ATLANTA BRAVES SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

MISSISSIPPI MEETING

We are longtime Braves fans, so when we heard Jeff Francoeur was playing in Mississippi, we immediately got tickets. Jeff was so kind to take time to visit with the fans. Our 16-year-old daughter, Laken, was thrilled when he stopped to pose for a photo with her. She will treasure the photo always, but more importantly she will remember how nice he was. Our other children got their caps autographed. Thanks to Jeff for making their trip special. He will forever be a hero in their eyes. It is because of guys like Jeff that we love to follow the Braves. We have come to enjoy going to Trustmark Park to watch the Mississippi Braves almost as much as coming to Turner Field.

MECHELLE WILSON
Shaw, Miss.



CT DOES THE HONORS!

I got to meet Jeff Francoeur July 5, and I was like a little kid at Christmas. I was so nervous, but he was very nice and down to earth. I had a great time, and Jeff even signed his rookie issue of ChopTalk (Sept. '05) and his grand slam issue (June '06) for me!

BOBBI CRADIC
Daleville, Miss.

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POWER LUNCH PACKS VERY TASTY PUNCH

BY DENNIS M. BYRON

WHEN IT COMES to Atlanta Braves events, it's pretty much guaranteed all of the components of entertainment are covered. Family fun, good food, a little humor, some off-the-wall activities, and, of course, baseball.

Well, the Braves' hitting streak continued with the July 31 Power Lunch featuring Hall-of-Famer Phil Niekro, wise-cracking slugger Chipper Jones, well-traveled reliever Buddy Carlyle, and the always easy going catcher Brian McCann.

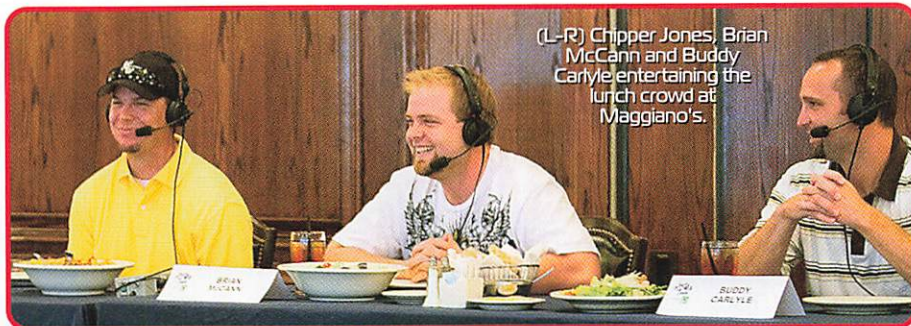
What Braves fan could pass up the chance to ask this stellar panel questions they've been pondering for years while dining at Buckhead's Italian hot spot, Maggiano's?

With good grub, a baseball legend, the Chipper & McCann one-two comedy punch, and Buddy, it seemed like a lot of bang for the 35 bucks. A raffle and giveaways at the end of the luncheon might even make it a grand slam... especially if I won something.

A couple of smiling faces behind a sign-in table quickly pulled up my name and provided a table assignment and raffle ticket. They directed me past the gift bags awaiting attendees after the luncheon and into the main ballroom where more than 250 fans wearing Braves jerseys, buttons, hats and even face paint were congregating.

I located the last seat available at my assigned table, where it seemed like I had arrived for Sunday dinner as the guest of a 9-person family. After greetings, the teen next to me (nicknamed "Junior") immediately began telling me about the first time he met Niekro and how nice the Hall-of-Famer was.

Interrupting the anecdote, Junior's grandmother ordered his dad to pass me a large serving bowl of spinach gnocchi with pesto



(L-R) Chipper Jones, Brian McCann and Buddy Carlyle entertaining the lunch crowd at Maggiano's.

PAUL ABREU/ATLANTA BRAVES

cream sauce and urged me to eat up. The smiles from the three kids, two teens, mom, dad, and grandparents left me little choice. Mixed greens, Caesar salad, rigatoni with meat sauce, and assorted cookies completed the meal.

Slamm, the emcee and popular Braves host, got things started with introductions of the main attractions. The legendary knuckleballer was welcomed with a standing ovation, followed by hearty cheers for Chipper, McCann and Carlyle. While kids scrambled to stand on seats to catch a glimpse of their favorite players (no autographs were allowed), the Braves quartet enlightened fans with candid answers to their light-hearted interrogation between raffles for signed baseballs, game tickets and Publix gift certificates.

The exchanges with the players and fans were quite memorable... and hilarious. One youngster named Devin stood on his chair and finally got the chance to ask Chipper the question intended to make a relative's dream come true.

"Hey Chipper, my uncle went to high school with you, and I wanted to know if you knew him," he asked with a tad of shyness.

After Chipper heard his name, he repeat-

ed it, looked at the sky in thought and replied, "Um...wow. No, I don't know him."

After a round of laughs, Chipper still gave the kid hope.

"Did he play any sports?"

Devin responded, "Ummm... he played baseball with you."

The laughs were deafening. Chipper shrugged his shoulders in defeat and said, "Hey, I'm getting old."

Mr. Knuckleball, who pitched the most quips of the bunch, added even more knee-slap to the uproarious exchange.

"You know, the older you get, there are three things that happen to you. The first one is you lose your memory. The other two, are, ummm..."

The room erupted.

Other topics surfaced, including the trick to catching the knuckleball... who would win a foot race between McCann and back-up catcher Corky Miller... listing all of the cities Carlyle played baseball for, and of course... Chipper and McCann roasting each other. It was definitely a good time. Before the players left, everyone gave them a standing ovation.

Even though I didn't win the raffle, this Power Lunch was a home run!

FAN CLUBS

BRAVES 400 CLUB

The Braves 400 Club is the official fan club of the Atlanta Braves. It is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting baseball at all levels. Annual membership is \$25 and includes a newsletter and the opportunity to participate in activities such as road trips, luncheons, the annual banquet, and charitable events. Send payment to: Braves 400 Club, P.O. Box 7689, Atlanta, Ga. 30309. For more information, call the organization's hotline at (770) 416-4539 or visit braves400.org.

MILWAUKEE BRAVES HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Milwaukee Braves Historical Association is a non-profit organization that promotes the memory of the Milwaukee Braves (1953-65). Annual membership is \$25 and includes a newsletter. Send payment to: Milwaukee Braves Historical Association, 6700 N. Range Line Rd., Glendale, Wisc. 53209. For information, call (414) 347-1212 or visit 57braves.com.

BOSTON BRAVES HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Boston Braves Historical Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to keeping alive the memory of the Braves in the city where the franchise began in 1871 and that it represented through 1952. Annual membership is \$15 and includes a newsletter. Send payment to: Boston Braves Historical Association, P.O. Box 5668, Marlboro, Mass. 01752. For more information, call (508) 485-1423 or visit Bostonbraves.com.

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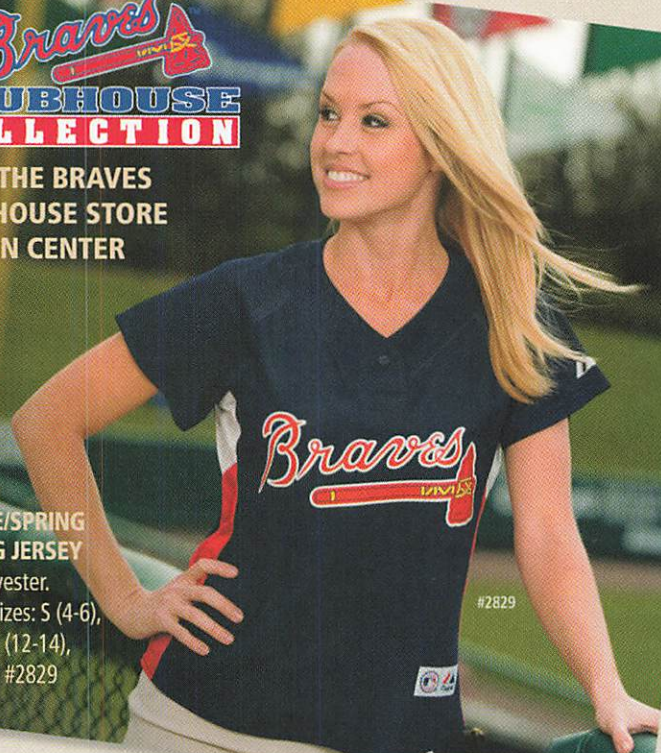


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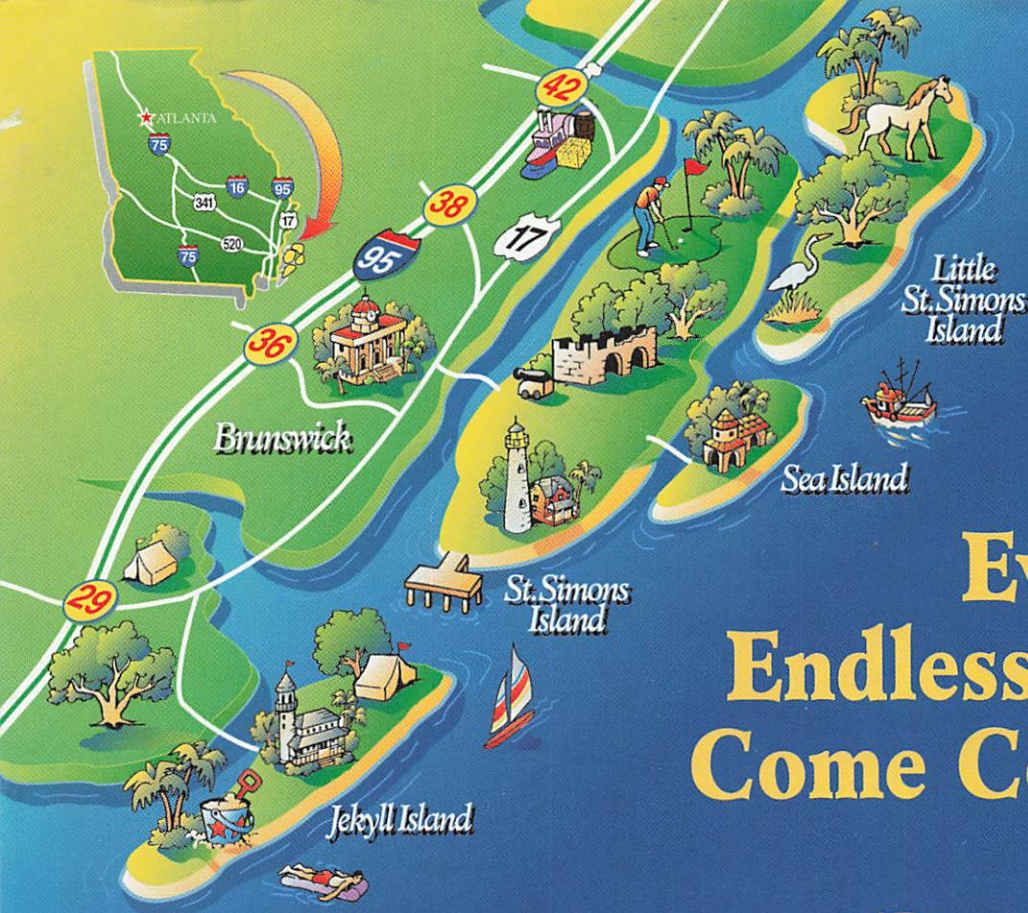
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